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THEIRS WAS A WICKIUP

Smugglers' Island and the Devil Fires of San Moros

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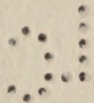
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SMUGGLERS' ISLAND

and the Devil Fires of San Moros

CHAPTER I

A PICNIC TO THE ISLAND

MARIAN HADLEY stood in the doorway of her home in a small seaport town of Mexico, watching her ten-year-old brother Delbert come stumbling up the hill with his arms full of mail.

"We're out early," he shouted. "The teacher let us all out early. There are the girls coming now, down by the office. Oh! and we're not going to have any more school this week. The teacher has got to go to the dentist every day, and she is n't going to feel like teaching; so we are going to have vacation."

"Dear me," said Marian, smiling, "what in the wide world will you children do, with so much spare time on your hands?"

"O Marian! Marian! Can't we — it will be just the time to do it — can't we go to Smug-

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glers' Island?" Delbert's body fairly quivered with excitement, and his dark eyes were shining like stars. "Let me ask Mr. Cunningham for the launch. We could go to-morrow. O Marian, do, please!"

Marian hesitated. "Smugglers' Island! That is a long way off. We could n't be ready by to-morrow; it is late now."

"We don't need anything but a lunch. I don't mean to get up a party. Just us go. We don't need to go to a lot of fuss."

If Marian had an especial weakness, it was her brother Delbert. She was proud of that spirited, handsome little face, and rarely clouded it by a refusal if a consent was possible. Besides the sister love she gave him in common with the other children, there was a desire to make up to him the loss of a companion brother who had died a few years before, a brother a little older than Delbert, but of much the same cast of features.

Now she thought, "Why not? Why think one must make elaborate preparations for every little pleasure, when the children would enjoy it as well, maybe better, without?"

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She laughed. "Here come the girls," she said. "We'll put it to a vote."

The little girls, Jennie and Esther, came up the path. Jennie was eight, a puny, thin little shadow, with eyes that seemed much too big because the face was so thin and colorless. She had been born a sickly baby and had averaged at least one illness every year of her life since, and had never known what actual health was. When Mrs. Hadley had decided to accompany her husband on his business trip to Guaymas she had thought seriously of taking Jennie with her, though she had had never a moment's uneasiness at leaving the other three in their sister's care. But it had seemed a pity to take the little girl out of school, where she was doing well; and also there was a good American doctor in town, whom Marian promised faithfully to send for at the first symptom of anything wrong; so, as Jennie herself did not seem to care about going, it was finally decided she should stay.

Esther, the six-year-old, stood in pleasing contrast to her sister. Having never known sickness, she was a sturdy, robust little specimen, as plump as the baby David, dimpled and rosy,

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with curly hair that was forever getting into her bright eyes.

Delbert was dancing with delight. "Girls, girls," he squealed, "listen, quick. All in favor of going to Smugglers' Island to-morrow, signify by saying 'Aye.' "

"Aye, aye, aye!" he yelled; and Esther, taking her cue, also launched a myriad of "ayes," but Jennie shook her head in grave disapproval.

"You are too ev'lastin' noisy," she said. "Marian, we are not going in the launch, are we?"

The baby was calling "Aye" most lustily.

"There," declared Delbert, "that's a m'jority, Marian. Three out of five's a m'jority."

Marian drew Jennie tenderly to her. "Delbert wants to go to Smugglers' Island to-morrow. It is a long way, but perhaps you would not be seasick in the launch. Do you want to go?"

The little girl's shining eyes were answer enough. Marian laughed and kissed her. "Delbert," she said then, "take that bill that is in my purse down to Mr. Cunningham now and refund him for the duties on these packages and thank him for me, — don't forget that, — and

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then see if he can let us have the launch to-morrow. It may be let to some one else, but if it is n't, and if we can have it, why, pay him for that too, and don't forget that. But I warn you children there's not a thing for lunch but bread and butter. I have n't so much as a cooky in the jar, and it's too late for me to bake now."

Previously there had lived at the Port for some years an American boy whose chief joy in life had been found on the water, and, having been blest with a small sailboat of his own, he had been able to indulge his sailor propensities to the utmost. Sometimes with other boys, often alone, he had sailed up and down the coast for miles, exploring the shallow bays and winding *esteros*,¹ and he knew all the sandbars and islands.

A few miles out from the Port was a group of islands known to the Americans thereabouts as the Rosalie Group. The natives gave them another name, unpronounceable, and certainly unspellable. They consisted of quite an assortment of rocky knolls and stunted trees, and little

¹ An *estero* (pronounced *es-tā'-ro*) is an estuary, an arm of the sea.

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beaches, fine for bathing. Most people confined their seaward excursions to trips of greater or less duration of time to these islands, some half-dozen in number, but Clarence had ventured much farther; he had even gone as far as San Moros, many miles down the coast.

San Moros was a wide-mouthed, shallow bay, full of rocks and sandbars, but at its farther extremity the young explorer had discovered an island that gave unmistakable evidence of having once been inhabited, — probably by smugglers, as in times past they had flourished like the bay tree all up and down the west coast, as everybody knows.

Boy-like, Clarence had kept his discovery a secret, or at least had revealed it only to a chosen few, Marian and Delbert being among the elect. And when afterwards he had made a second trip to the place, Mrs. Hadley had allowed Delbert to go with him. Clarence had been fond of children and of Delbert in particular, and often took the little boy with him on his all-day trips on the water. On this occasion they had camped over and explored the Island and its surroundings.

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It was long months now since Clarence's family had moved from the Port, but Delbert had always been anxious for a second trip to the Island in San Moros, being eager to show it to Marian and his little sisters.

Before long Delbert came rushing back. "We can go! We can go!" he called. "We — where's Marian? — oh, there you are. Mr. Cunningham says we can have the launch. The man he usually sends with it is sick or something, but he got Mr. Pearson to take us instead. We can start early in the morning. Goody! And say, Marian, can't you fix some dough for doughnuts and let me fry 'em for you?"

Marian looked severe. "Do you remember what happened the last time I let you fry doughnuts?" she asked.

Delbert's eyes twinkled. "Yes," he said, "but that was learning; I won't do it that way now."

"Shall we trust him, Jennie?" she asked.

"If you don't, there won't be any doughnuts to-morrow," Delbert assured her. "Marian has not got time to make 'em."

"I guess we can this time," decided Jennie.

"Me fry doughnuts, too," said Esther.

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"I am afraid me had better not," said Marian; "but you and Jennie may roll and cut them out for Delbert. And Davie, you sit up in your high chair and watch sister stir up these doughnuts quickly, and then Davie shall make a doughnut of his very own. Delbert, put the granite-ware kettle on, and the lard is in that pail on the shelf there by you. I think there is just enough; put it all in."

She hurried the ingredients together, and, as soon as the dough was ready for rolling out, turned it over to the apprentices and ran out of the kitchen to the numerous other tasks that awaited her.

"You have n't read us mamma's letter yet," called Jennie.

"Oh, I will read it while we eat supper," Marian answered.

"What mamma say?" shrilled Esther.

"Says they will be back in two weeks," came Marian's muffled voice from the far bedroom.

Presently she came back. "Jennie," she said, "do you know what was done with your and Esther's bathing-suits when you came back from bathing the other day?"

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Jennie looked blank, but Esther answered promptly.

“Down to Bobbie’s.”

“Down at Bobbie’s? Whatever did you leave them there for?”

“Oh, yes,” cried Jennie, her face brightening, “I ’member now. We stopped to play and hung ’em on Bobbie’s mother’s clothesline and forgot ’em.”

“Well, that’s a great way to do! Esther, you run down after them now.”

Esther was kneading doughnut dough industriously. “To-morrow,” she said.

Marian considered a moment, and then said: “No, you go now, it is two days they have been there already, and they may have got into some corner where Bobbie’s mother won’t know where they are, and we won’t have any time to hunt for lost things in the morning. It is a long way to Smugglers’ Island, and we must get off early or we shan’t have time to explore it and get back by dark.”

Esther sighed, and began to clean the dough from her little fat hands. “Tell where we going?” she asked.

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"No; better not."

"Why?"

"Oh, because if Bobbie knows we are going in the launch, he will want to go, too, and I know positively his mamma would n't let him."

"Why?"

"Oh, you little interrogation-point!" expostulated Marian under her breath. Aloud she answered patiently, "Because Bobbie was awfully naughty and went in the fishing-boat without asking his mamma, and she was so worried about him, and when he got back she told him he could n't go anywhere except to school, — not anywhere, not even up here to play with Delbert, — for two whole weeks."

"Not two weeks yet?"

"No, it is not two weeks yet. Now, do go on, Esther. Just ask for the bathing-suits and don't make Bobbie feel bad by telling him about a picnic he can't go to."

In the morning, before Marian had breakfast out of the way, Delbert came in with a rush. "I have just seen Mr. Pearson. He is going to his breakfast, and he says he is all ready, and

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he wants to know if there is anything you want him to do."

"Yes," said Marian; "tell him to get a demi-john of water. Mr. Cunningham has a demi-john he uses for that, but Mr. Pearson may not think of it."

"Oh, but there is water on the Island, plenty of it."

"Yes, my dear, but it has not been filtered, and I don't want you children drinking anything and everything. Oh! and did you put plenty of water for the chickens, Delbert?—and put a big stone in the pan so they can't tip it over?"

"Bread and butter and doughnuts," she continued, "and I must take milk for Davie. Dear me! I have n't enough to fill the jar either. Here, Jennie, get a dime from my purse and take this pail and run down and see if Bobbie's mother can let me have a quart of milk. If she has n't it to spare, you will have to go to Doña Luisa. Delbert, find the hatchet. It will come in handy when we come to build a fire for noon."

"Have n't you got eggs, Marian? Take some

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raw eggs, and we can boil them over a fire; it's lots of fun."

"I've only three, Delbert, but if you can, get some at Bobbie's, or ask Fanny's mother if she can spare me some."

"We can get crabs and clams, you know," said Delbert. "There's barrels of 'em. Clarence and I had 'em. But take plenty of bread and butter, Marian. Mr. Pearson can eat a lot, I know."

"Yes. Run on now and see about the eggs, and then go down and tell Mr. Pearson about the water. Let me see," she continued,—"what else? Oh, yes, if we go bathing, I shall have to comb my hair."

She wrapped up her comb and brush in a clean towel, and then, on second thought, tucked in a little pocket-mirror and a cake of tar soap and two more towels.

"Marian, me got my spade and pail, but me can't find baby's," called Esther.

"His little pail is here," answered Marian, "but I don't know where his spade is. Let him take the big dig-spoon instead." A dig-spoon, be it known, is a spoon so old and dilapidated

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that mother does not mind if the children use it to dig in the dirt with. The big dig-spoon of the Hadley children was a huge iron affair about a yard in length that had doubtless been originally intended to stir soup in a hotel kitchen.

As they started down the hill on the way to the pier, Bobbie's mother ran out to her gate. "Marian," she called, "are you taking plenty of wraps with you? You know it gets cold toward evening."

Marian held up a couple of light shoulder shawls. "Delbert has his coat," she said, "and Esther and I never want anything around us anyway. There are always a couple of blankets on the launch seats."

"Oh, you foolish child," declared the lady; "you wait." She ran back into the house, and in a moment came back with a very large heavy circular cape, "There, you take this," she said. "It will cover you and Esther and the baby too. Jennie will need both those flimsy shawls. You know it won't do to let her get chilled."

Marian thanked her laughingly and accepted the cape.

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Mr. Cunningham was down on the pier. He was a dapper young man, pleasant and good-looking and well liked by everybody at the Port, and he held the most lucrative and responsible position of all the Americans there.

He smiled

as the

Hadley party
trailed down the hill
and out on the pier, the
sturdy baby well in the lead.

"Here comes King David
and his train," he called.
"By Jove," he added, ob-
serving the huge dig-spoon,
"he has his scepter with him

too. — Good-morning, Miss Marian; do you
mean to tell me that basket is full of lunch?"

"Not quite," laughed Marian. "There is a
hatchet and my workbag and a few other things
as well."

"Workbag!" exclaimed Delbert in disgust.
"What did you bring that for?"



MARIAN LAUGHINGLY
ACCEPTED THE CAPE

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"Oh, I may hemstitch a little while you children dig in the sand. I shan't ask you to do any sewing, Delbert."

As the big basket was being stowed away in the launch, Mr. Cunningham said laughingly, "If you find you have not enough, Miss Marian, there is some canned stuff in the locker you are welcome to."

"Thank you," said Marian, "I think we have plenty. I have been on trips like this before; I know how children eat. Delbert, I forgot to put in anything to cook the eggs in. You wanted to boil them, and we have n't a thing."

"Use Esther's pail," he suggested.

"It leaks too badly, and baby's pail is wooden. No, if you want those eggs cooked, you will have to go back and get something."

"There will be the clams, too," said Delbert, starting back across the pier on a trot.

"Oh, and, Delbert —"

"What?"

"You might bring Jennie's cape, too, while you are there; and, Delbert, Delbert! Be sure and lock the door again when you come out."

"We ought to have something to bring home

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clams in, too," she said after a moment, "but he is too far gone now to call back."

"There is a big pail here in the boat-house," said Mr. Cunningham, going to get it.

"I shan't be here when you get back," he said, coming back with the pail, "but the launch can be turned over to Manuel. I am going up the river for a couple of days. I must be getting ready now, so I will bid you good-bye and wish you a pleasant trip."

He shook hands with Marian, pulled Esther's curls, smiled at Jennie, stood the baby on his head a moment, and strode off across the pier.

Soon Delbert came running down the hill again, his arms full.

"Morning, Mr. Faston," he called to an old gentleman who, with a basket on his arm, was starting toward the plaza for his breakfast steak.

"Good-morning, Delbert. Where you all going so bright and early?"

"Going to Smugglers' Island."

Delbert ran down to the launch and scrambled in. "I brought baby's jacket, too," he said, dumping the wraps, the granite-ware kettle, and

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a little bright new dishpan in a heap at Marian's feet.

"I see you did, but whatever did you bring that dishpan for?"

"Why, it was sitting out there on the table, so I s'posed you forgot it, and I was n't going to be sent back again."

Marian laughed. "I had no notion of bringing it," she said. "Well, Mr. Pearson, I guess we are all ready. You'd better start off before we think of something else we might like to take."

"Just think, Marian," said Delbert; "Mr. Pearson has not been outside the harbor since he has been here."

"No? Never been to the Rosalie Group, Mr. Pearson?"

Pearson cleared his throat. "No; when a man is busy he don't get much time for picnics," he said.

"I am to show him the way," continued Delbert, "and he is to make the launch go there."

It was a lovely day. The children were fairly bubbling over with the glee of it, and Marian herself felt unusually gay and light-hearted.

Mr. Pearson was rather silent. He was a

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newcomer to the Port, and Marian had had hitherto but a bare speaking acquaintance with him. She had an instinctive feeling, however, that he considered children as necessary nuisances; so she tried to keep them from annoying him too much with their chatter. However, though he volunteered no remarks, he answered good-naturedly what was said especially to him, followed minutely Delbert's instructions as to their direction, and listened with apparent interest when the little fellow told of trips taken with Clarence in the sailboat.

Outside the shelter of the harbor they encountered the high waves of the Gulf, and Davie was so frightened that Marian had much ado to keep him quiet. Jennie, too, began to feel a few qualms of her old enemy, seasickness, so that with them both Marian had little chance to exchange sociabilities with Mr. Pearson.

Leaving the Rosalie Group on their right, they turned down the coast bound for San Moros.

Delbert was entirely unafraid. The higher the wave the better it suited him, and he was constantly declaring he only wished they were going to stay a week. Esther echoed him, as was

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her wont, and Jennie feebly put in a few remarks of the same tenor, her feeling in the matter, however, being born of a desire to put off the nausea-beset homeward trip rather than to prolong the picnic joy.

Finally they rounded the point and entered San Moros. Delbert remembered just how



FOLLOWED MINUTELY DELBERT'S INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THEIR
DIRECTION

Clarence had made his way in among the many rocks and sandbars, most of which were covered at high tide. The Island lay some miles back, a crescent in shape, high and rocky at one end and running out to a narrow sandy point at the other. No one approaching it would have mistrusted it was other than the mainland, for the formation was such as to blend it perfectly with

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the mainland back of it, and it showed no sign of the strip of water between till one was close upon it.

"We landed first by that point of rock," declared Delbert, pointing, "and then afterwards we took the boat in back of the Island and tied her to the pier till we were ready to go home."

"I guess that is a good enough programme to follow now," said Mr. Pearson. "Did n't you say this side was best for crabs? That's a nice-looking beach along there, fine for you kids to bathe on. We will tie up to those rocks till after dinner."

"Well, all right," agreed the boy. "There is a path up to the top of the hill, Marian, but it does n't come down on this side. Clarence said the smugglers wore it going up to peek over the hill to see if any one was coming for 'em."

The little point of rock on the seaward side of the Island made a very good substitute for a pier. They landed there and were able to reach the sand without getting their feet wet. Jennie declared she felt better as soon as she touched shore.

Delbert was anxious to lead the expedition

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over to the other side of the Island, where remained the signs of former habitation.

“You can go on over now,” said Pearson good-naturedly; “I’ll unload the launch and take a swim, and if you say there is anything there worth looking at I can go over afterwards.”

Delbert hesitated; he was counting on expatiating on the extent and glory of the ruins and preferred a large audience.

“Why, of course, Delbert,” said Marian; “Mr. Pearson can take the launch around after dinner. This is the best side for bathing. I am not sure,” she added, as the children started off, “but after dinner would be soon enough for the rest of us, but —”

Pearson laughed and shrugged his shoulders. “There is no wait in that kid,” he said.

“I see there is n’t,” said Marian, as she started after her eager brother.

The hill was decidedly rocky and steep, with a goodly strip of sandy beach at its base. The crabs scurried away as the children ran across this.

“See, Marian!” called Delbert; “see all those

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crabs? We'll have them for dinner. Don't they look fat?"

"Fat and luscious," laughed Marian. "You are fat and luscious, too, baby darling," she continued, catching Davie as he stumbled over a stone, "but those qualities alone will never make a mountaineer of you."

Delbert forged ahead, scrambling over rocks and skirting thorny bushes, and the others followed as best they could.

"I suppose when you get there you will stop and wait for us," called Marian.

"Oh, yes," he answered; but he did not take the hint and slacken his pace then.

His bump of locality was good, and although it was almost a year since he had been there, he made his way directly to the spot on the apex of the hill where a faint path led down on the other side. Here he paused, and, letting out a series of triumphant whoops, announced his arrival to his upward-toiling sisters.

One by one they joined him where he sat on a big gray rock, swinging his lariat, his most treasured possession, a new hair rope given him by an old Mexican a few weeks before.

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"Dear me," said Marian, all out of breath, as she set down the baby, whom she had been carrying the last part of the way; "whatever did you expect to lasso here, Delbert? Crabs?"

"No," he replied, "burros! Did n't you know there were burros here? There's a herd of 'em. Clarence said probably the smugglers had to leave in a hurry and could n't stop to round up everything they had. Anyway, there's burros here. Yes, and pigs, too. We saw their tracks; we did n't see them, but Clarence said when he was here the first time he heard 'em grunting in the bushes."

Marian was examining the surroundings. "I believe Clarence was right," she said. "That is a real path certainly, but there is not a sign of it on the seaward side of the hill. Whoever lived down there used to come up here to this rock. You can see away out into the gulf from here, ever so many miles, but it is so bushy that no one here would ever be seen."

"Yes," assented Delbert; "Clarence called this Lookout Rock. Farther back this hill spreads out into a *mesa*.¹ It's several miles long.

¹ Pronounced *mā-sà*; a small tableland.

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Clarence said there were deer here, too; he saw 'em."

"An' wil' cats?" queried Esther.

"No," said Delbert. "I remember when we camped here it was awful quiet at night, and I asked Clarence if he s'posed there were any panthers here, and he said no, he had n't seen a sign of any such thing here, and he guessed if there ever had been, the smugglers had killed them all off."

"That is not unlikely," said Marian; "but the burros and pigs must have come from what they had; perhaps the deer, too, — they might have had some for pets. But, come, if we have our breath now, children, we'd better go down; for see, Mr. Pearson has the launch unloaded already, and there is dinner to get when we get back."

So they followed the twisting trail downward. It was very faint, in some places entirely obliterated, yet taken as a whole was distinct.

Between the Island and the mainland lay a strait that was deep enough for even large steamers, though there was little of San Moros that a big steamer could have ridden safely over.

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A little rough rock pier had been built here. "And Clarence said the fellow that built it understood his business, too," declared Delbert, emphatically. "He said it was a good job; but come and look at the bananas," he continued, leading the way.

The Island, which elsewhere presented such rough, not to say precipitous, sides, here was level or nearly so. A house had once stood there. The mound of its ruins was unmistakable. In one place a forked timber stuck up; on one side was a pile of other timbers overgrown with weeds and shrubbery. There was a spring, too, that had had some sort of masonry cover, broken now, but with a tiny pool of water at the bottom of the rocks. There were the remains of an old stone wall that had once surrounded a garden, of which only a thick, matted banana-patch was left.

A banana plant grows to maturity, produces one bunch of bananas, and then dies. During the time it is doing this a number of young plants spring up about the parent stalk, and each of these produces its one bunch of fruit and group of little ones, which in turn go through

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the same process. It will be readily seen, therefore, that, with no one to trim out the old stalks and superfluous young ones, a banana-patch would in the course of time become a very crowded place, indeed.

This was just what had happened to the Smugglers' Island patch. How long it had been left uncared-for no one could tell, but it was now an impenetrable jungle.

Marian and the children walked all round it, looking for bananas, but except for several bunches from which the birds had eaten the fruit, leaving the blackened skins dangling, they saw only one, and that was too high up for them to reach. It did not look very tempting, anyway. A little beyond were a few fan palms, but this kind of palm bears no fruit.

Marian sat near the site of the old house, while the children rummaged about and explored. This was certainly an ideal place in which to hide from the world, a sunny little spot, sheltered and secluded, for the hill hid the place from the seaward view, and across the narrow strait lay only the rocky, thorny tangle of the uninhabited hill of the mainland, with not even

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an Indian ranch for miles and miles, Clarence had said. Marian wondered what chance or incident had caused the abandonment of the place.

Presently she rose.

"Come, children," she called, "we were going to catch crabs for dinner, you know. We must be going back."

So they went back up the dim little path to Lookout Rock and began to pick their way down from there as best they could.

"Why, Marian," called Delbert, "Mr. Pearson has moved the launch. It is not by the rocks now. Where's he gone?"

Marian glanced up.

"I guess he thought we were pretty long in coming and has gone exploring on his own hook," she said.

"I'll see," said Delbert, and he went out to where he could see the water all around the end of the Island and in to the little pier.

"No," he said, as he came back, "he has not gone round there."

They went on down the hill.

"I don't see why he should move it," per-

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sisted Delbert. "That is the best place for it on this side of the Island, and this is the best beach for bathing."

They went over to where the things were piled up. Pearson had dumped them all together and thrown one of the launch blankets



MARIAN TOOK IT OFF AND READ IT, AND THEN STOOD LOOKING
AT IT FOR SEVERAL SECONDS

over them; and on top of this a note was pinned with two wooden splinters.

Marian took it off and read it, and then stood looking at it for several seconds.

"Delbert," she said quietly, "did you know of any trouble between Mr. Pearson and Mr. Cunningham?"

"Trouble?" repeated the boy, startled, —

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“trouble? Why — why, no, — not —not trouble. Why?”

“Because,” said Marian, still quietly, “Mr. Pearson has stolen the launch and gone away and left us here.”

CHAPTER II

FOR SHELTER IN A STORM

DELBERT stared with wide eyes for a moment; then he snatched the note from Marian's hand to read for himself. He was not much accustomed to reading writing, but this was very plainly written with a purple indelible pencil on a leaf torn from a pocket memorandum-book.

Miss Marian, —

Boss Cunningham has done me plenty of dirt and now he is going to regret it just one gasolene launch. Sorry to inconvenience a lady and all that, but the kids want to stay overnight anyway.

Delbert looked up again into his sister's face; then, dropping the note, he sped across the sand and up the hillside to where he could get a good view of the Gulf beyond the bay.

Marian picked up the note, and still stood looking at it.

"How we get home?" inquired Esther.

That was precisely the question that was racing round in Marian's brain.

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"I don't know — yet," she said.

Slowly she took off the blanket that was thrown over the things. The other blanket was there, too, and all of their things, also the five-gallon demijohn of filtered water and a tin box of crackers, nearly full, three cans of corn, and a quart can of tomatoes. She remembered Mr. Cunningham had said there were some eatables in the locker.

A big crab came slowly up and regarded them. Marian returned his look gravely. "Yes," she said, "I see you are there, and we may thank our stars you *are* there, too, you and your relations."

"W-won't Mr. Pearson come back?" faltered Jennie.

"I am afraid not," answered Marian.

"But — but what shall we do?"

Marian reached down into her boots, where her heart had sunk, and pulled up a smile by main force and put it on her lips. A connoisseur in smiles would have known at a glance that it never grew there of its own accord, but Jennie was only eight and was not versed in artificial smiles.

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"Well, my dear," said the big sister, "we can't walk back and we can't swim back, so I guess we shall just have to Robinson Crusoe it here till some one comes after us. When they find we don't come home, they will hunt for us, of course. See here," she added, briskly, pulling out the big pail Mr. Cunningham had lent them for clams, "you children take this pail and get some crabs. I will build a fire, and we will have dinner right away before anything else awful happens to us."

The children, reassured by her tone and smile, took the pail and trotted off down the beach. They had caught crabs on the little beaches of the Rosalies and understood the business. Even Davie got a stick and landed a few.

Marian gathered some sticks and built a fire in the shade of a big rock. She had it well started when Delbert came back to her.

"I can see something black away out in the Gulf; probably it is him," he said.

"Probably," she answered.

They brought the things up to the fire and began to unpack the basket.

"I don't see why he did it!" finally burst

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forth Delbert with clouded face and quivering lips.

“Well,” said Marian quietly, “he evidently was a different kind of man from what we supposed. There are a few such people in the world.”

“But, Marian, no one knows where we are. They would n’t know where to look for us if they were hunting for us.”

“No, but I have been thinking, probably Mr. Pearson does n’t know that. What did you say to him last night?”

“Nothing. Mr. Cunningham did the talking. He just called and asked him if he could go out with a party in the launch to-day, and he said yes and came over and asked who was going, and when Mr. Cunningham told him, he asked what time we should want him. It was this morning he asked me if I knew the way, because he had never been out to any of the islands, he said.”

“Did you tell Mr. Cunningham where we were going?”

Delbert thought a moment. “No; I just asked could we have the launch for all day.”

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"And you did n't tell Bobbie or any of the other children?"

"No; I did n't see any of them last night, and not to talk to this morning. When I went for the milk, I just said we were going in the launch. But Bobbie's mother knew we were going; she brought out the cape to you."

"Yes, but she did n't know where. I never thought to mention it to any one. When you came back with Jennie's cape, you told Mr. Faston we were going to Smugglers' Island, but unless some of them remember hearing Clarence tell of it they won't know where Smugglers' Island is."

Delbert shook his head. "Clarence did n't tell about it to any one but his folks and us. We had it for a secret. Why, Marian, they won't know at all where to look for us!"

"No," replied Marian steadily; "it was an awfully mean trick for Mr. Pearson to serve us, even without counting the stealing of the launch, but you see, Delbert, Mr. Pearson supposes every one knows where Smugglers' Island is. He heard what you said to Mr. Faston, and, besides that, I've been thinking, and there was

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not a single thing said on the way out this morning that would have led him to suppose we were the only ones that knew about the place. We talked about my never having been here before, but not a word but what other people knew. He supposes of course everybody knows, and that when we do not come home to-night they will come straight here in the morning."

"But they won't," said the boy. "When we don't come home they will think we are camping over. They won't know till Mr. Cunningham gets back that we were coming home to-night, and he is not coming back for two days."

"Oh, they will all know I would n't have taken you children out camping with only Mr. Pearson along; besides Bobbie's mother knows we did n't take any bedding along, and even if she did n't, she would know that if we had intended to be gone overnight you would have asked Bobbie to take care of the chickens."

"Well, anyway, what if they do know we meant to be back? They don't know where we are. Hunting the Rosalie Group over won't find us." Then he smiled a little grimly. "Do you know, Marian, it will be the chickens that

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will tell them about it? They won't worry about us to-night; they will s'pose, of course, we will get in all right; but in the morning all our chickens and old Peter Duck and Madam Waddle and the whole brood of 'em will simply swoop down when Bobbie goes to feed his chickens. Then they will begin to investigate. That's all the good it will do them; they won't find us," he concluded moodily.

"Marian," he burst forth presently, unable in his nervous state to put up with his sister's silence, — "Marian, what do you think?"

"Delbert," she answered, pausing in her work and looking up at him, "the biggest thing in my mind just now is that bunch of bananas we saw over on the other side."

Delbert's eyes roved over the provisions before him. "How long will this last us?" he inquired.

"Well, I planned it for perhaps two meals for six people; as it happens, there are only five to eat it, and we have Mr. Cunningham's eatables as well, you remember," — she gave a little laugh. "You remember he said we were welcome to them, if we did n't have enough of ours."

"Huh! I should think so. You bet Mr. Cunningham would never do a dirty trick like that. We — we can starve here for all Pearson knows or cares."

Marian put down the kettle and went to her brother, with his flushed face and flashing eyes winking back the tears. She drew the slender little form into her arms close and tipped up the handsome, quivering little face.

"Delbert boy, darling," she said softly, "we are not going to starve. The children might if you and I were not here, but we are here; there are clams and crabs for the gathering, and I know a boy who, with his jack-knife, can make a trap that will catch quail, and I once knew him to kill a rabbit with a bow and arrow."

"Yes, and you scolded me for it, too," he said.

"I did. We did n't need that bunny rabbit at all, but these babies are going to need feeding, and we shall have to feed them with whatever we can get, rabbits or what. And we can take care of them, Delbert, you and I, till somebody comes. We will do it in spite of Mr. Pearson."

"Pearson!" said the boy fiercely; "he can just go to — to blazes."

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Marian leaned down and kissed him. "No, dear," she said lightly, "but he may go to some other port and let the police catch him and send him and the launch back to Mr. Cunningham."

The boy laughed chokily and, twining his arms about his sister's waist, held her closely while she stroked his hair.

"No, darling," she said presently, "we will not worry. You and I can do a lot of things; you will see. Now, here come the girls with the crabs. We must n't let them be frightened."

Delbert straightened up. "How many did you get?" he called, and Marian smiled at the easy cheerfulness of his tone.

"Oh, you will do," she said approvingly, "you will do."

While she cooked and prepared the crabs, she sent the children off after clams. Under Clarence's tuition Delbert had become quite an expert at finding clams, and fortunately they were plentiful. Marian, poor child, wondered how long one could live on an exclusive diet of crabs and clams before getting utterly sick and tired of them.

She decided to put everybody on a rather

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short allowance of bread, so as to make it last longer and explained it to them when she called them up to eat. They did not mind; they preferred crabs anyway.

“Marian,” said Delbert, “I can’t think of a thing between Mr. Pearson and Mr. Cunningham, except that Mr. Cunningham did n’t like his work when he first came and discharged him from the shop. But he has been working somewhere else ever since; that need n’t have made him mad.”

“Probably there is something that we don’t know about,” she said.

“Well,” he persisted, “I bet Mr. Cunningham did n’t know about it either. He would n’t have sent him out with us if he had n’t thought he was all right. There was a fishline and hooks, too, in the locker,” he continued. “Did you see anything of them, Marian?”

She shook her head. “He only left us the crackers and canned stuff — oh, and a box of matches, and I had another one in our basket.”

“How many fires can we build with them?” he asked.

“A good many, but we don’t need to use them;

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we can keep live coals over from one time to another, as papa does in the fireplace winters. That is what we'll do and use the matches only when we really have to. On a sunshiny day I could light a fire with the crystal from my watch."

They had never heard of such a thing, and Jennie and Esther wanted her to take it off and show them how at once.

Marian declined. "We have a fire now," she said. "The thing for us to do is never to let it go out, day or night. If it goes out in spite of us, because of something we cannot help, then we can build one some other way."

"Don't people on desert islands build signal fires?" asked Delbert.

"Yes, and put out flags of distress, too. We could n't keep a fire going *all* night, but we could put up one of the towels or the tablecloth day-times, and we can build our fire nights where it can be seen out at sea. And I think about the first thing we'd better do is to get up a wood-pile."

That was an easy task. There was much driftwood along the beach, besides the sticks that could be gathered from the hillside; and the

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children enjoyed gathering it up, and Marian would have also if she had not been inwardly so perplexed and worried.

To add to her worries, the sky turned cloudy and the wind rose. Suppose it were to storm, and she with not even a tent to shelter these little ones!

"Delbert," she asked, finally, "is n't there a cave on this Island?"

"Sure," he answered; "right down here a way. Let's go see."

Marian's hopes rose, only to fall again when she viewed the cave. It stood barely above high tide, a dark hole, foul and ill-smelling from the myriads of bats that lived in it.

"Dear me!" she said, "we can't sleep in this, Delbert. Besides, if a storm should come up, the water would wash right in."

"It goes back a long way," said Delbert. "Clarence and I went in with a torch, but the farther you go the smellier it gets. Phew! No, I should say we could n't sleep in it. If it's a cave to sleep in that you want, I guess we shall have to hunt one up."

So they climbed back up the hill and began

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an investigation of the big masses of rock which at that end of the Island looked as if some giant hand had tossed them up and they had since lain in the same wild confusion in which they fell.

It would be very strange, thought Marian, if some sort of shelter could not be found among these. But she had no luck. Several places she discovered that would have been ideal in pleasant weather, an overhanging rock to keep off the dew, or a thick, dry, mossy bed, but when wind and rain were to be considered —

Finally Delbert called to her from a point farther up than she had yet gone.

“O Marian, here is a sort of a crack; maybe it would do.”

She scrambled over the intervening rocks and surveyed the “crack,” and though it was far from being what she wanted, she saw at once that it was the best place they had yet found.

It might, perhaps, have been called a miniature cave. It was not high enough to stand up in, but extended back some ten or twelve feet, growing smaller and smaller, till at its extreme end it was not more than a foot in height. Its

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width was about the same as its depth. A few feet away from the opening rose another rock, a smooth-faced, gigantic mass that would keep the worst of the wind and rain away from the mouth of the cave, or crack, as Delbert called it.

"I believe it is the best we can do," she said. "We could at least keep dry and warm in there. All the other places would be good only in good weather. We'll get some sticks and poke around and see if there are any snakes or anything."

Delbert promptly followed the suggestion. He crept in and punched and poked most industriously and raked and scraped with energy, but could start nothing, and he declared there did not seem to be any cracks leading any farther back.

"That's all right, then," said Marian. "I did n't want to dispute the right of way with any snakes or centipedes. Now we'd better go down to the bananas and get a lot of dried banana leaves to help out our bed."

This they did, gathering an enormous bundle and tying it with the lariat rope. Then Marian slung it over her shoulder and so with a very little assistance conveyed it to the Cave.

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By this time it was getting late in the afternoon. The sun had disappeared completely from the gray sky, and the wind had risen so that there was no doubt at all about the approach of a storm.

"We must bring everything up," decided Marian. "Everything must come under shelter here right away. We must not leave even the dig-spoon down on the beach." She was seized with a nervous dread of the water, which was already rolling in higher than usual.

The little feet got tired of going up and down the rocky hillside, but Marian and Delbert persevered till everything, even the wood they had gathered, was safe at the Cave. Then Marian arranged things as best she could for the night. She packed their belongings, so that they would be some shelter for the bed of banana leaves and blessed Bobbie's mother for the big cape, which, with Jennie's pinned to it, would serve as a third blanket. Then she built a fire back of the big rock that sheltered the mouth of their cave bedroom, and cooked the clams for their supper.

The children huddled together by the fire. They were enjoying the experience. Marian was

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big; she would take care of them; and it is fun to cuddle down behind a big rock and watch your supper cook over a dancing camp-fire.



COOKED THE CLAMS FOR SUPPER

After supper Marian carefully packed a solid chunk of wood in a bed of coals, covered these with ashes and dirt, and piled little rocks over them to protect them from the rain that she felt sure would come in abundantly before morning.

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She kept a fire going for light, as they had no lamp or lantern of any description.

The children were tired and willing to go to bed after they had eaten, and Marian herself was fully ready to lie down after she had got them all packed away. She slept, too, for a while, but when the storm came it wakened her, and there was no more sleep for her all that long, long night.

The roar of the sea was terrific; the big waves were sweeping in from the sea and breaking on the beach with thundering crashes. The flashes of the lightning were intense, and the thunder seemed to Marian to shake the very earth. She had thought they would be protected from the wind, but it seemed to sweep over them with perfect freedom. She shivered and shrank closer to the children. Davie was next to her. He seemed to be warm and comfortable and he slept peacefully in all that pandemonium. Poor little chap, he had been all worn out climbing up and down the hill and chasing crabs on the beach. The others woke, and Marian anxiously inquired if they were all warm. Delbert said his feet were cold, but aside from that all were

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fairly comfortable. Crowded in together as they were, they kept one another warm.

But they were frightened, and no wonder! The storm outside was a regular tempest, and they were cooped in that little hole, sheltered from the rain, indeed, but exposed to everything else.

They were afraid the rock roof would fall and crush them, that the lightning would strike them, and Jennie was afraid the water would wash up to where they were.

Marian knew there was no danger of the first and no probable danger of the second, and she knew they were far beyond the reach of anything less than an actual tidal wave that might engulf the whole Island.

She soothed and reassured them by every argument she could think of, and then she sang to them all the songs she could call up that might tend to reassure the shrinking human spirit at such a time, beginning with

“The Lord’s our Rock; in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm”;

and finishing with a rollicking glee with a rousing chorus that announced that

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“We’re all right, all safe and tight,
Let ’er howl, Bill, let ’er howl!”

And indeed “she” was howling outside so furiously that it was only because Marian’s lips were so close to their ears that they could hear her songs at all.

Some time along toward morning the thunder and lightning ceased, and though the rain still came down in a steady pour, the wind still blew, and the waves still thundered on the beach, one by one the children dropped off to sleep. Marian did not. She lay there in a cramped, uncomfortable position, for to change it meant to get out from under the covering and expose the children to more of the cold wind. She wondered where Pearson was passing the night. How she longed for morning, yet when it came it brought little enough of relief. The worst fury of the storm seemed to be over, but the wind was still high and there was some rain.

Marian’s carefully banked fire was utterly drenched and washed away, and she had to light a new one with a precious match. She built it under shelter of the Cave, and then the smoke nearly drove them out into the storm.

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There was some of the clam soup left from supper, and, reinforcing it with one of Mr. Cunningham's cans of corn, she was able to fill them all up with a hot breakfast.

They could not see anything because of the big rock in front of the Cave, and to go out past the range of it meant to be drenched, or at least dampened, and every one but Davie could see that that would not do. The little girls could stand up in the wider part of the Cave, but when Delbert forgot himself and tried it he got such a bump that he fairly cried with the pain.

Marian smoothed up their bed and packed the food back into the basket, and then racked her brain for methods of amusement. There was not much that could be done, but they played a few simple little games that could be played while sitting still, and really, all things considered, got on marvelously well.

In the afternoon there was a cessation of wind and rain for a while, so that they did venture out a little, but Marian was so fearful of their getting their clothes damp that it was not much diversion, after all. Of course, every tree was loaded with drops of water that the slightest

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shake released, and the ground under foot was soaked and running in little rivulets.

The second night was only less miserable than the first. There was no storm to frighten them, and they slept more, but they were colder and more uncomfortable when they were awake, which was really a good deal of the time, after all. By morning the wind had died down and the sun was struggling to break through the remaining clouds.

When Bobbie went to feed his chickens on the evening of the day the launch party went out, his little round, freckled face wore an unusually sober expression. As he tossed out the handfuls of corn, he gazed out over the waters regretfully. The way of the transgressor is hard certainly, but only the last part of the way, the first part is most remarkably easy. He had been down on the pier that fateful morning with his mother's full knowledge and consent, — nothing wrong in that, — and when the fishing-boat was ready, the men had said, "Come along, Bobbie," and "Come, jump in if you want to, kid," and there was no time to go and ask his

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mother; they would not have waited for him if he had; even his mother admitted that. There was no time to go and ask, so he had gone without asking, and see what he had had to suffer on account of it. One whole week already with no diversions besides school and errands, and another, dreary with monotony, stretching ahead of him.

To-day had been worst of all, with the Hadley house closed and silent, and Bobbie knew they would have asked him to go with them if it had not been for that ill-fated fishing-trip.

He heaved a sigh and flung out the last kernels, and then, as many of Delbert's chickens were hungrily helping themselves and the launch was not yet in sight, he went over to the Hadley yard, climbed through the shed window, and measured out the amount of corn he knew Delbert always fed his flock. After he had given it to the eager biddies, he went back home, and a little later, when he ran out to shut up his own, he went over and closed Delbert's coop also, first carefully counting the inmates, as he knew Delbert always did. When he found one was missing, he searched till he found the silly

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thing perched on a barrel in the yard, a tempting meal for coyotes, and, hustling the misguided fowl into the coop, closed the door securely. It was a service that he and Delbert performed for each other so often that he did not even mention the matter to his mother, and she, busy with her household tasks, gave the launch party scarcely a thought, and supposed, of course, it came home on time.

The storm was the worst the Port had known for years. Bobbie might have saved himself the trouble of closing the coops so carefully, for both were blown to pieces, and numbers of the chickens of each were drowned. People had no thought or time to spare for chickens and their coops. Roofs were sent flying, and many a wall had to be braced and watched through the wild night. While Bobbie's mother hurried to and fro, moving things out from under the leaks in the roof, quieting her frightened children, and keeping general watch and ward, she thought of the Hadleys and spoke of them to her husband.

"Marian's kitchen roof is probably leaking like a sieve," she said, "but I guess the rest of the house is all right."

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"Yes," he answered, "I was just thinking it was lucky Hadley fixed things up so well before he left. As it is, it is the safest house in town."

"Dear me!" cried the lady suddenly, discovering a stream of water coming down in a corner hitherto considered safe and dry, "I only wish ours was. Half the things I have will be utterly ruined if this keeps up."

"And it is going to keep up all right," was the consoling reply of her husband.

In the gray morning, when the storm abated and men in waterproofs began to venture out and take stock of the damage done and compare notes, it was discovered that the launch had not come back; that while frailer shelters had gone crashing down, compelling their inmates to flee through the storm to other shelters, the "safest house in town" had stood untenanted and alone.

When Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, hurried back from Guaymas by the awful news, reached the Port, every foot of the Rosalie Group had been searched over. On one had been found a child's handkerchief beaten into the sand. They gave

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it to Mrs. Hadley, and she looked at it a moment silently. Just a ragged, soiled little thing it was, with a faint trace of what had once been a picture printed in bright colors.

"It's Esther's," said the mother, and she put it away, the most sacred of her treasures. As a matter of fact, it was not Esther's at all, — Esther had hers with her at that moment, — but the grimy little rag was taken for evidence indisputable that the launch party had been on that particular island.

Over and over the boats went out and searched. All of the Rosalies, all of the *esteros* and marshy mud flats for many miles were gone carefully over, not, indeed, with any hope now of discovering the lost ones, but for some trace, some sign, something washed from the wreck.

When Mr. Cunningham returned, he declared himself completely mystified. He knew the launch was in perfect condition when it went out that morning, for he had examined it himself; and he knew Pearson was in every way competent to run it. There had been plenty of warning of the oncoming of the storm, plenty of time to have returned in safety.

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But the launch did not return; it had gone out into the blue, and the blue had swallowed it entirely. The waves lapped, lapped on the rocks and little beaches, the seabirds swooped and called to one another, and in time even the gray-haired father gave up the search, and he and his quiet, sweet-faced wife packed up all their belongings and left the scene of their terrible sorrow.

Only one person had advanced any theory other than that the launch party had been in some way wrecked and lost in the storm. One man had suggested that perhaps Marian and Pearson had eloped, — an idea that caused more than a few smiles even at that time, for an eloping couple would have been *so* likely to take the lady's four small brothers and sisters with them. Just how any accident could have occurred was a mystery, but that one had happened no one doubted.

Old Mr. Faston had, indeed, told of Delbert's remark to him that they were going to Smugglers' Island, but Bobbie and the other children told of playing pirate and smuggler on a sandbar of one of the Rosalies, and the childish game was,

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of course, thought to be the reason of Delbert's statement.

So time passed. The Hadleys had gone from the Port, Delbert's chickens were added to Bobbie's flock, a Mexican family moved into "the safest house in town," Mr. Cunningham bought a new launch, and, so far as the Port was concerned, the incident was closed.

CHAPTER III

COMMISSARY MATTERS

BUT for Marian in the midst of her hungry, grimy little flock the incident was far from closed. Indeed, it was only begun.

When their food was all gone but the can of tomatoes and a part of the crackers, she made up her mind that nothing but accidental help could be looked for. No one, not even her parents, knew anything about Smugglers' Island, and probably they were thought to have perished in the storm. Perhaps Mr. Pearson had been swamped and drowned. In the course of time some one would come into San Moros for something, — Indians hunting turtles maybe, — but it might be long months before they saw a human being besides themselves. There was no one to rely upon but themselves; whatever was done they must do themselves.

Looking at the cluster of trowsled heads, Marian set her teeth together and clenched her hands tightly. The fierce protective spirit of

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motherhood swept over her. They were hers, these little ones; come what would, they should not perish, they should be fed, sheltered, cared for. They should have their child's rights of tender love and happiness. Esther, running up just then, was caught in a close embrace and kissed fervently.

The Cave afforded the best shelter for night that they could find. As soon as things were dried up a little from the storm, Marian set about improving it somewhat. For tools she had only the hatchet, Esther's spade, the dig-spoon, and Delbert's knife and lariat.

With the hatchet she cut sticks and brush and with the lariat dragged them up to the Cave, where she and Delbert made them as best they could into a sort of roof for the space between the Cave and the big rock in front. It was crude work, of course, but it gave shade and to some extent served as a wind-break, at least. It was just high enough to stand up under.

A place to cook over was soon made of a few rocks, and then Marian turned her attention to the securing of food other than crabs and clams. First there was the banana-patch. Not finding

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any good way of reaching up to the bunch they found there, they cut the stalk it was on, first looking carefully to see that there was no other bunch on the same stalk. Later on they learned that each stalk bears but a single bunch anyway.

Unquestionably those were the worst bananas that Marian had ever seen in her life. Not only was the fruit small and dwarfed, but about half of each banana was a dry, brown pith, while what remained was very far from being good. But they were food, and Marian conveyed that bunch of bananas to the Cave with the greatest of care.

Then with the hatchet and knife they cut down a great many other stalks and dragged them out of the way, so that they could get about in the patch and see what was there. It was not the pleasantest work in the world, for they had to keep a sharp lookout for ugly, crawling things. They found, however, several other sickly-looking bunches and quite a number of birds' nests. These last Marian was careful to leave undisturbed.

Delbert was anxious to fly a signal flag, and

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as Marian was wearing an extra petticoat, she decided to dedicate it to that purpose.

But it was a question where was the best place to fly it. There were no very tall trees, and no place where it did not seem to her that a flag would blend with the background. She had really very little hope of its doing any good, but she did not suggest that to the children.

At last they picked out a tree and, after considerable discussion as to ways and means and several ineffectual attempts, finally succeeded in attaching the white skirt to one of the higher branches, where Delbert was sure it would be seen if any one chanced into San Moros.

Delbert was continually mourning that they had no fishhooks and lines. He and Bobbie had been famous fishers, — in their own estimations, at least, — and he was quite sure that if he only had a hook and line he would be able to haul out innumerable fish from the quiet water about the little rock pier. Marian searched through their belongings and not a hook could she find, and all her thread was rather fine. But though crabs and clams were good, it took a great many of them to satisfy five people three times a day, and it

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took more time to prepare them than Marian wanted to spend. She declared that she would not open the can of tomatoes till they were actually starving and could not get anything else, and she put them on an allowance of one cracker apiece each meal. Davie often howled for more, but Marian resolutely put them where he could not get them for himself, and his lusty wails availed him nothing.

A few quail occasionally wandered into Delbert's traps and from there into Marian's kettle, but Marian was not content, and one day she braided her hair in two braids down her back and tried her hand at making fishhooks out of her wire hairpins. She had not brought her shears with her, but in her bag was a pair of little buttonhole scissors that could be made to serve as plyers, perhaps, and her pretty pearl-handled penknife had a nail-file on one blade. She could not put barbs on her hooks, but she could sharpen them with the file. As one hairpin by itself was not strong enough, she straightened out three and bound them tightly together with embroidery silk.

After working faithfully all her spare time,

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one day she finished a hook that she and Delbert were both sure would work. Then came the question of a line.

"Delbert," she said, "quite a while ago was n't Bobbie's Uncle Jim teaching you boys how to braid round whiplashes? Yes? Well, do you remember now how he did it?"

"I guess I do," said the boy slowly; "but you have n't got near enough thread to make a line strong enough to amount to shucks. That colored silk would be all right, but you've got only a teenty bit of that."

Marian smiled. "Why is your rope better than a common one?" she asked him.

"'Cause it's hair and it won't rot and wear out like the fiber ones."

Marian was unbraiding one of the long braids that hung over her shoulder and with the scissors she snipped out here and there, where it would not show, quite a number of tresses.

"Here," she said, "you get busy now and let's see if you know how to braid a nice, smooth, round line, and then you can show me how, too."

"O Marian, your pretty, pretty hair!"

"Yes, I know; it has been my pretty hair all

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my life, and it's high time it was useful as well as ornamental."

But it took a long time to braid the line, and food had to be secured meantime. Food!—that was the main topic of conversation,—to find clams, to get big crabs, to make traps and set and watch them afterwards. Never a fish was sighted but they wondered if it was good to eat; never a bird flew over but they discussed whether or not it would cook up tender. Delbert used to go twice a day, at least, to look over his traps. Simple things they were, made of sticks fastened together with strips of rag torn from the towel that had been wrapped around the bread, and afterwards of the fibrous stems of the banana leaves. Every day he saw rabbits, and one day he threw a stone that hit one on the head and stunned it, and he despatched it with his knife. He did not seem to mind killing the things that got into his traps, and Marian was glad he did not, since it had to be done.

It was after the rabbit incident that the little boy came in one day from making the round of the traps, holding by the tail a good-sized rattlesnake.

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"Mercy!" cried Marian, "how did you kill that?"

"With sticks and stones," he answered. "He was right there in the path by my last trap, and I settled his hash in a jiffy. Say, Marian, he looks nice and fat. Bobbie's Uncle Jim says they are as good eating as eel."

Marian gasped, "Snakes!" But the clams were getting scarce in the immediate vicinity, and she had even begun to imagine that the crabs were not quite so plentiful on the little sand-beaches.

"The history says," continued Delbert, "that when the Spaniards were conquering this country and South America, sometimes when parties were sent out to go to places and got lost and wandered around, they had to eat roots and snakes and toads."

Marian was thinking she had certainly heard of people eating rattlesnakes and — well — "All right," she said, turning away to the construction of the fishline, "you skin it, Delbert, and I'll cook it."

The filtered water in the demijohn did not last very long, of course, and when it was gone Marian marshaled all hands to clean out the

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spring. She usually marshaled all hands when there was anything to be done, because somehow she could not bear to have any of the children out of her sight for any length of time. When they were with her she knew they were safe. True, there seemed to be little danger of any kind, save that they were surrounded with plenty of water to drown in, and there was no knowing how many more rattlesnakes the Island might possibly contain.

She had hoped that when she got the stones cleared away the spring would reveal itself as something extra good in the way of water-supply, but it did not. Indeed, she was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that it was no spring at all, only a shallow little well.

In the rainy season the water falling on these islands sinks into the sand and stays there. One could find fresh water any time by digging at a little distance back from the beach, where the sand lay in hills and hollows, and Marian concluded that the only reason why the water came to the surface in that particular spot was because it was situated in a decided depression of the ground.

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So she dug and scooped till she had a hole with about a foot of water in it, and then she smoothed the sides and laid rocks so the sandy soil should not cave in. From the tracks abounding in the vicinity she concluded that the deer and burros both were accustomed to drink there, and while she was willing that they should continue to do so, she did not want them poking their noses into the very pool that she must dip from for her little flock; so she made a cover with some sticks and pieces of driftwood and some stones to keep them in place, and then, to be still surer, she hollowed out another place for her four-footed neighbors. The old dig-spoon and the little spade were her chief tools in these labors.

"Dear me! Delbert," she said playfully, "why did n't we have sense enough to bring a hoe and shovel with us?"

"Huh!" he retorted gloomily, "if we had had any sense we'd have stayed at home."

"There may be something in that too," she answered.

"I know what I could do if you had brought your shears," spoke up Jennie.

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“What, dear?”

“I’d cut a thing from this,” holding up the piece of tin cut from the end of one of the cans of corn, “that Delbert could spear fish with.”

Delbert stared at her a minute, and then with one of his nervously quick movements possessed himself of the ragged bit of tin.

Marian had opened the can with his knife. He looked at it a moment and spoke excitedly. “We could! It would n’t be like a regular spear-head, but we could catch ’em. I know just how the Indians throw them. Bobbie has one, but he’s never caught anything yet.”

The idea was certainly worth trying. Marian would not ruin her precious buttonhole scissors cutting tin with them, but she scratched the pattern in the bit of tin and then went over it with the tip of the butcher-knife, denting it; and the dents, made deeper and deeper, finally became holes, and then soon there was her spear-head, such as it was, needing only to be smoothed up a little and filed and bound on the end of a smooth, slender stick that Delbert had been preparing.

Marian split the end of the stick a little and

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slipped in the bit of tin and bound the stick with thread that she had doubled and twisted till it was strong enough to suit her, then tied the lariat rope to the other end of the stick.

Delbert spent the next day in exercising the new tool. His patience was certainly marvelous. Hour after hour went by with no success, but he was sure he would be successful some other time.

"I'll get on to it after a while," he said, as they ate their supper of hot clam soup. "Those Indians at the Port catch them right along."

"The thread will soon rot out," said Marian. "I ought to have wire to wrap the end with; copper wire would be best. There are two hair-pins left, but they are so short I can't fix them, I'm afraid."

It was fully a week afterwards before it dawned upon her that she had in the edge of her hat-brim a nice piece of copper wire that just filled the bill, and though its removal left the brim rather droopy, that was a small matter.

Their supper they always ate at the Cave, as the light of their fire could be seen far out from there; but breakfasts and dinners were usually

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eaten down on the beach to save the trouble of carrying food and water up the hill. Marian had built a second place for cooking down in the shadow of the big rocks where they had eaten their first dinner on the Island, and the children had dug a well in a hollow of the sand not far off, which they used, although the water did not seem to be so good as that on the other side of the Island, having more of a salty flavor.

As Marian was carefully dipping water from the beach well one morning, Jennie and Esther came running to her in great excitement.

“O Marian, come quick! The High-Tide Pool is full of fish, and Delbert is going to spear them all!”

This was interesting, certainly. The High-Tide Pool was down quite a way from where they had the well and the cooking-place. It was beyond the sandy beach, where the rocks ran down into the water. When the tide was high it had considerable depth, and ran back into a little cave among the rocks, but at low tide the water was only two or three feet deep in its deepest part, which was in the cave.

Sometimes they had seen a few little fish in it

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before, but that morning the little girls had gone down and found it well stocked.

Probably just as the tide was going out, a great number had taken refuge there. Perhaps some enemy was lurking outside and they dared not leave the safe retreat, and now they could not leave it till high tide came again.

Delbert was spearing industriously when Marian got there. He had actually caught one, and it flapped feebly on the rocks beside him.

As his sister came up, he triumphantly called her attention to it.

"See that? Told you I could spear fish! But they all want to hide back there in the cave. I tell you, Marian, I'll go in there and drive them out, and you can stand here and spear them. We'll just keep spearing and spearing till the tide comes in and the rest get away. I bet we can get enough for several days. We can dry 'em as the Mexicans do."

He handed her the spear and began hastily to disrobe. Delbert's movements were always hasty.

Marian began casting the spear unsuccessfully, but when Delbert got into the pool he

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created such a commotion that several of the fish in their wild endeavor to escape, flopped clear



MARIAN HAD BEEN CASTING THE SPEAR UNSUCCESSFULLY WHEN
DELBERT GOT INTO THE POOL

out on the bare rocks and were easily captured. By that time a better idea had come to Marian.

“O Delbert,” she cried, “come out now, wipe up on my apron and get back into your clothes. We have enough for breakfast and dinner, too.”

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"Oh, but we want all we can get," he called back. "We can dry 'em, I tell you, and as soon as the tide is high again they will all get away."

"That's all right, but listen! I have a scheme for keeping them all. This is too good a thing to let the tide take away from us. Why, there must be fish enough in there to last us a week at least, maybe two. See, Delbert, we must build some kind of a fence across, so they can't get away when high tide does come. Then we can come every day and get what we want till they are all gone."

Delbert splashed right out without more remarks.

"We can do it with rocks and sticks and brush," she continued. "It won't be possible to drive stakes in the ground here, because it is n't ground, — it is all rock, — but we can make them stand firm by piling rocks around them."

She went to work systematically. She set the children to bringing rocks, while she and Delbert cut the stakes and brush up on the hillside and dragged them down with the rope. Then, selecting the place where she could accomplish

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her purpose with the least labor, she set a row of stakes a little way apart, piling rocks about each one till it was quite firm and solid, and then began weaving in brush.

It was a long task. Trip after trip she made up the hillside with the rope and hatchet, and her face and hands were scratched with the thorny brush. The children grew tired of helping, and Davie was crying because he was hungry, for Marian would not stop to prepare food. She dared not. In that little pool was food, food. If she could shut the way across before the tide came in, then she and her little ones were safe without question for some time to come; if not — “Why, Delbert,” she said, “we might live here for years before we should have such a chance again.”

Finally she sent him up to start a fire and clean the fish they had got before they began the fence, and when he had them in the kettle over the flames he returned to help her. Thereafter she would occasionally send up the little girls to put on more wood or to pour a little more water into the kettle, but she herself kept at the task.

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Marian did thorough work; she dared not slight it in a single place; it must be strong enough to resist the force of the waves, and it must be so solid that no fish of any considerable size could get through, and she dared not stop, she dared not stop. The tide began creeping back over the rocks, and she sent the children back for more brush and sticks, and more still, and went herself again, and still again, and now the water was running over into the pool again, and still she worked. She knew how high up on the rocks it would be when the tide was at its full height, and she must get above that. She had done the work well so far, yet it would all be in vain if she did not get above high-water mark.

Finally she finished it with the water waist-deep around her, and as she dragged herself out, it seemed as if she had never been so tired in all her life before, but she was sure that her work was done well. Tired and hungry and smarting from scratches and the thorns she had not had time to remove, she was yet happy. For the first time since Pearson's treachery had left them stranded there, she felt a firm foundation under her feet.

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In spite of the little girls' care the fire had gone out under the kettle and the fish were not done. They were not very trustworthy as cooks yet, but Marian started things going again and sent Jennie up to the Cave for a blanket and some safety-pins and a needle from her workbag.

When she came back, Marian removed her wet clothing and donned the blanket in its stead, pinning it in place with the safety-pins, and then proceeded to extract thorns with the needle. Delbert also required some of the same surgical attention. Then, as soon as the fish were done, they broke their fast, and afterwards she took Davie and lay down in the shadow of a rock to sleep, secure in the knowledge that there were fish enough in the kettle for one more meal and that there were plenty more where they came from.

The fencing-in of High-Tide Pool certainly marked a new period in the life on the Island. It was the first work of any size, and its completion gave assurance of food for many days to come without spending all their time in the securing of it.

Afterwards Marian bent her energies on the

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fishline to the exclusion of everything else till it was finished. It took the two extra hairpins to fasten the hook and line together satisfactorily, but Marian did not grudge hairpins nor time nor labor when she saw how eager the fish of High-Tide Pool seemed to be to attach themselves to that amateurish-looking implement. She thought the fence she had built probably served, to some extent, to screen out the smaller fish that would otherwise have provided breakfasts and luncheons for those she had imprisoned. At any rate, their appetites seemed to be excellent, anything was acceptable as bait, and Delbert was now and then successful in spearing one.

They worked another day on the banana-patch, thinning it out and letting in the sunlight, and another in dragging more brush up to the Cave to shade and shelter it, and in carrying up more dried banana leaves for their bed.

Then Marian said she was ready to go on an exploring expedition.

So far they had gone no great way from the end of the Island where they had landed, but now she decided the time had come to learn more of their locality. Some of the bananas were

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ripe; that is, they were soft and could be eaten. They could take them along for lunch.

Delbert was a little afraid some one might come while they were gone, but Marian had a lead-pencil in her workbag and with it she wrote on a smooth piece of driftwood a brief account of their predicament which she left in a prominent position near the tree their signal flag flapped on. To make assurance doubly sure, they put another signal flag by the side of the notice.

Not being sure they could find water on all parts of the Island, Marian thought it would be safest to carry some with them, but the only thing she had to carry it in was the two-quart Mason jar that had held Davie's milk. They would take Mr. Cunningham's pail, too, and the spear and lariat and hatchet. It seemed to Marian that that was all they would need, but Davie was very sure the dig-spoon would be indispensable, so he carried that also.

They went along on top of the hill where Delbert had set his traps. It was very rocky at first, but became more even and level, with fewer rocks, and more open and grassy. There was an abundance of thorny brush, but no trees of any

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size worth mentioning. This portion of the Island they used afterwards to refer to as the pasture. Beyond it the thorny tangle became thicker again, and here were more rocks. Indeed, the farther end of the Island fell quite precipitously to the water without any sandy beaches, but they could make their way down well enough, and most of the way could follow the shoreline without wading.

The Island was fairly uniform in shape, and it looked to Marian as if it had been broken as a whole from the mainland ages back, the sides there being very steep and precipitous, as was the shore of the mainland opposite. The little harbor did not seem to extend very far, and no vessel of any size could have picked her way through behind the Island.

The seaward side contained various little bays and coves, very fascinating to explore, but only one of these was of any size. This lay in such a relation to the tides and currents that it gathered more of the flotsam and jetsam of the sea than any or all of the others, and when its treasure possibilities were realized it was named Bonanza Cove.

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These details were not all learned in one day's exploration, but little by little as day after day they searched and learned.

Always supreme above all other motives was the search for food.

Every plant or root or berry that they knew to be edible they eagerly seized upon, and Marian was constantly warning them lest they grow careless in their selection and suffer thereby.

One day they found the burros all down by the water-hole on the landlocked side of the Island. They had seen them before, about a dozen in number, but had not paid much attention to them. They were grazing peacefully on the outskirts of the banana-patch, and the children were quick to notice that the herd had been increased by one in the last day or two, a silky-looking little fellow with that peculiarly fascinating quality that only a baby burro has.

In glee they ran toward them, but though the burros seemed to be not at all wild, they plainly did not mean to permit any actual handling and skillfully evaded all attempts in that direction. After several ineffective attempts to round up the woolly baby, the children stopped to rest

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and regain their breath, and the four-legged infant sidled up to his mother and proceeded to lunch.

Suddenly Marian turned to her brother. "Delbert," she said, "can you lasso that old burro as she stands there?"

"Reckon I could if I tried. What do you want of her?"

"See that baby there fairly guzzling down the milk, and look at our baby here without a spoonful all these days. Don't you suppose that old mother burro has more than that little fellow really needs in his business? Anyway, if he had to go a little short he could make it up on grass."

"O—oh!" ejaculated the boy, "burro's milk? Why, Marian, it would n't be good."

"Indeed, my dear child, burro's milk is a regular article of commerce in some places, just as cow's and goat's milk is in others."

"Anyway," reflected Delbert, "if we did n't tell him, Davie would n't know but what it was all right. Milk is milk to him; he would n't care."

"Of course not," said Marian briskly; "you older children might object to it, but it won't make any difference to him whether he shares

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with a baby burro or a baby calf. You just get a good loop over her head, and we'll try this thing out."

As a matter of fact, getting a loop over the mother's head was the easiest part of the business. Delbert soon accomplished that, but Ma-



GETTING A LOOP OVER THE MOTHER'S HEAD WAS THE EASIEST
PART OF THE BUSINESS

dam Burro had no intention whatever of standing still and being milked. Indeed, she developed quite surprising activity, and it was only after at least an hour of patient labor that Marian was able to secure a few spoonfuls of milk in the tin cup which the little girls brought down from the Cave.

"Now, then," said Marian, "the thing we have got to do is to secure the baby. If we keep

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him tied here, his mother will stay around, and we can try her again in the morning. But if he is turned loose with her, we may not be able to get near them again."

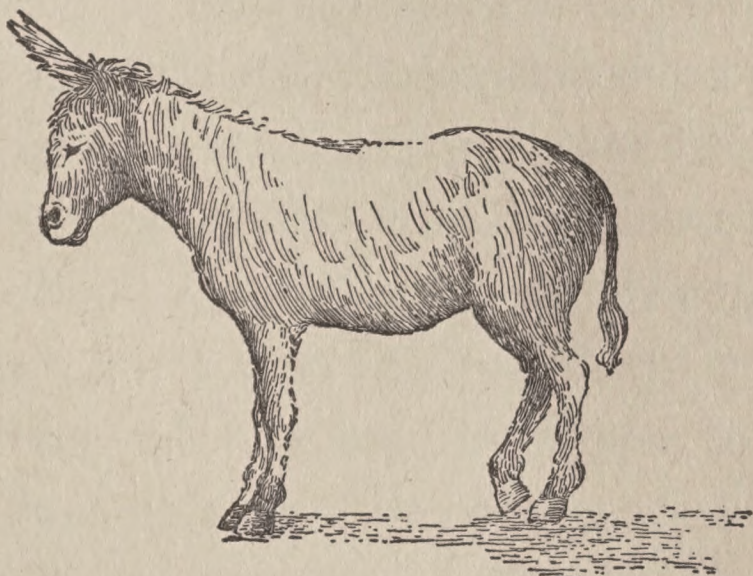
"But we have only one rope, and if I take it off her she will take him right away now," said Delbert. "Let's keep her tied up, I should say."

"Well, tie her up till morning. Then we can think of some other way to do. It will not do to keep her tied all the time, for then we should have to feed her."

As they ate supper they discussed ways and means. They could make palm-leaf ropes that would do very well to tie the little one with, but that did not seem to be as convenient as Marian wanted. Finally they decided to make a little corral to keep the baby in. Then he could nibble at weeds and grass and could not reach his mother except when Marian chose, and she could thus have a better chance to secure a ration for Davie. The corral would have to be pretty solid and secure, she thought, or the old burro might tear it down; still, it would not have to be quite as compact as the fence that had been built at High-Tide Pool.

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They went to work at it the next morning. A little of the old stone wall was still solid enough to serve, but most of it was badly tumbled down, and they could not seem to do much at building it up again. The banana-patch could be used as one side, — it was so thick nothing would try to go through it, — and a couple of palms could be utilized as fence-posts. There were several



JACKIE

nondescript bushes that could be worked in too. The banana stalks they had already cut down could be used as building-material, and more could be cut. They were soft and thornless, which was an advantage; also every stalk they cut out improved the patch by giving those remaining a better chance to grow and mature

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fruit. The hatchet was getting pretty dull, but Marian managed to hack off a number of slender stakes, which she set in the ground in pairs just far enough apart to lay a banana stalk in between; and these stalks all averaged about the same size and were piled one above the other to the top of the stakes, which were then tied together with banana-leaf stems.

The old pile of poles was overhauled. Part of them were so worm-eaten that they fell apart in Marian's hands, but some were of a different kind of wood and were still solid. These were built into the fence as children build corncob houses, and Marian was only sorry there were so few of them. For part of it they used brush, but that was not so easily handled as the bananas or poles because of the thorns. The corral was not finished in one day nor in two, and when it was finished it showed half a dozen styles of fence-pattern and had no particular shape, but was, nevertheless, very satisfactory, as it would hold the little one in and keep the old one out.

The little burro was easily driven into it, and then the old one was turned loose. She grazed about during the day, and when milking-time

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came Delbert could easily lasso her. Then, with much labor and great tying of legs and an abundance of help from the children in holding of the same, Marian would get Davie's little portion of milk. Then the four-legged baby was allowed to have what remained, after which he was engineered back into the corral.

In the morning the same performance was gone through. During the day the mother and baby could rub noses through that part of the corral that had been made of poles, and in the course of time they both became so tame that the little one was a pet and a playmate for the children and the old one offered but little objection to sharing with Davie, who used to sit on the top rail of the fence and watch the milking with wide eyes that let no detail of the performance escape him.

He was very generous, too, considering the small amount of milk he received, and would offer to share with the others; they would all take a sip, even Marian, to encourage his unselfish impulses, and, as Delbert said, for politeness' sake.

CHAPTER IV

BONANZA COVE

It was about the time that the corral was finished that they came to realize that they had lost count of the days and really did not know how long they had been on the Island. They had even lost track of the day of the week, and Marion did not know when she had ever done that in her life before. She and Delbert sat down and figured and figured, trying to count back and remember what had been done on each day; but it was no use, it had been too long. Jennie, however, was quite sure that it was Wednesday then, though she could not tell why, — she just thought it was, that was all, — and so, assuming that she was correct in her belief, Marian easily figured up what day of the month it was then, for of course she knew the day and date upon which they had left home.

“Now,” she said, “we will not trust to our memories any more. Every day I will put a notch in a stick,” — which she faithfully did,

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using for the purpose a smooth stick that Delbert picked up on the beach one day. As a matter of fact, Jennie had been mistaken and they were two days ahead of time, but they did not know that till afterwards.

The days were filled pretty full. Marian thought that the busier they were, the less would they be a prey to loneliness and homesickness. They tumbled out of the Cave mornings, milked the burro, got breakfast, and then worked awhile at something till it was time for a big sea bath.

When they first began their life on the Island, Delbert was the only one who could swim to amount to anything. Clarence had taught him, and he had been a very apt pupil; but the others knew so little of the useful art that Marian herself dared not venture beyond her depth, while the little girls declined water that was more than knee-deep and Davie preferred it even less than that. But already there was a vast improvement among them all. As the way to learn to walk is to get up and walk, so the way to learn to swim is to strike out and swim, and they were following that method.

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After dinner there were walks to take, little coves to examine, or ropes to braid. Marian watched over the children with eyes of a most jealous, brooding love. Never had they seemed so dear to her, never so sweet and precious. She was constantly thinking up things to amuse as well as benefit them. Of course, she could not perform impossibilities, and there were some doleful days. There was one perfectly awful day when she found Jennie huddled down behind a rock, crying for her mother. And Delbert would sit for an hour at a time on Lookout Rock, gazing out over the water, so wistful and disconsolate that it made Marian's throat choke up just to see him, and she would rack her brain for some interesting thing to set him at to keep him busy.

But it is only fair to say that the doleful spots came far less often than one would have supposed they would. Marian was always steadfast in her assurance that some one would find them some day. They would take good care of each other and be as happy as they could till some one should come and take them back to the Port. And she herself always kept a cheerful

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face. Her loving voice and sunny smile, her merry little ways, inspired confidence. As much as possible she made it appear that a desert-island experience was a very desirable thing to have happen to one. She twisted things till they looked like a joke, and in the process often found herself growing as light-hearted as she wanted the children to be.

The bill of fare was limited, to be sure, but they brought to it appetites sharpened by the constant exercise they were taking in the sea air and the sunshine.

One day up in the pasture they ran across a *panal*.¹ This is the nest of a kind of wild bee and is made of the same material that our hornets use in constructing their homes, but the bee itself is not so large as a hornet. Marian saw the nest first and pointed it out to the other children merely as a matter of curiosity, but Delbert straightway became excited.

There was honey in that bees' nest; he knew it; splendid honey. Had n't Clarence bought some once of an Indian and given him a lot?

¹ Pronounced *pah-nahl'*; plural, *pah-nah'-layss*. It is the regular Spanish word for honeycomb.

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And Clarence had told him all about *panales*. You take all the outside honey and comb away and leave the core, and they will build on again, just as tame bees will.

Marian was a little dubious. Honey was all very well, but stings were not at all desirable. How were they to proceed to get the sweet store?

"We have no bee-smoker," she reminded him, "and if we had, there are no rags to be burned in it."

"Huh!" declared Delbert scornfully, "do you s'pose the Indians have smokers? — or rags either? No, sirree! they just build a fire of trash they gather up. Besides, the stings of these little bees don't amount to shucks!"

It was not in Marian's policy to discourage him from doing anything not actually dangerous to life and limb, and she was glad he was willing to dare the stings; so she said they would go back to the Cave for the little dishpan and some coals to start a smudge with, and see what they could do.

The younger children were to keep back out of the danger zone, — which they were very willing to do, for they did not share Delbert's

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optimism about the trifling nature of wild-bee stings, — and she and Delbert swathed their hands and faces as well as they could and still be able to work handily. They built three little fires about the bush the nest was in, and gathered trash and piled it on till they were all smoking finely. With a forked pole Marian raked one of them as nearly under the nest as she could, and then, holding her skirts carefully so that they should not swing into the fire, she began the task of robbing the little bees.

Delbert held the pan, and she cut off layer after layer of the paper-like comb filled with the clear sweet liquid, but she was careful to leave a goodly portion at the center for the bees to begin on anew. Then they retreated with their booty, threw a towel over it, and gave it to Jennie and Esther to carry off, while they raked back and stamped out the fires and threw dirt over the ashes, so that they could not start up again.

During the whole performance both of them had received stings, but, as Delbert said, they did not amount to much, and certainly honey never tasted sweeter.

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From then on the children's eyes were always open for *panales*. They found two small nests that they decided to let alone till they



THE TASK OF ROBBING THE LITTLE BEES

were larger, and about a week later they found one down near the shore that yielded even more honey than the first. They got several stings, too, and Marian smiled grimly as she reflected how necessity was teaching them hardihood.

BONANZA COVE

That was the day they discovered the riches of Bonanza Cove.

They had never gone down into it before, having always skirted it quite a way up on the hill, for there was no sand at that part, only ragged rocks with broken shells and barnacles, interspersed with occasional clumps of mango bushes, — certainly not easy ground for little feet to run over. But this day, as they were returning home with the little dishpan of luscious sweetness, Esther had declared, “I see a bottle”; and on the strength of that declaration they climbed down into the cove, for a bottle would be a very valuable thing to have. And, once there, they found so many valuable things that they gathered up a load and carried it home and went back in the afternoon for more.

The bottle proved to be a quart beer-bottle that some one had doubtless tossed, corked but empty, over some steamer’s side, and careful search revealed six others, besides the remains of several that had been broken. Marian hailed them with delight. Now they could carry water in bottles when they went exploring, and leave her precious glass jar safe at the Cave. She

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had always been afraid it would get broken on some of those trips. Five of the seven bottles were only pints, but were none the less eagerly welcomed and treasured.

Also there was discovered in a clump of mango bushes, half buried in the mud, an old broken five-gallon demijohn. The basketwork enclosing it was nearly intact, and Marian thought they might use it for something some time.

The wreck of an old barrel was also rescued from the mud. Only three of its staves were gone. Who knew what might not some time be done with what remained? Several rusty tin cans were acquired. Marian could mend them by drawing a tiny rag through the holes in them; and Esther came up with a piece of scrap iron that might be made into a spear-head if a body only knew how; Delbert knew Clarence could have done it all right. They found three little boards, too, and an old shoe whose top was not yet stiff. Besides all this, there were innumerable armloads of driftwood. They gathered it up into piles beyond the reach of high tides.

But the most exciting discovery of all was the remains of an old canoe. One side and a goodly

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portion of the bottom were gone, but it was undeniably a canoe. It had been tossed up on the rocks by some storm and had lain bleaching in the sun ever since. Nothing would do but Delbert must get that old fragment into the water. They all caught his enthusiasm and worked with a will.

The canoe was of native manufacture, having been hollowed out from one big log, and what was left of it seemed to be quite solid. After they had it floating they hunted up poles and practiced the art of navigation for a while. It was a clumsy thing, and of course everybody connected with it got wet, but already Delbert had visions of what it might lead to.

"Marian," he said, "let's pile a lot of that wood on this and take it around that way. It will be a lot easier than carrying it over."

"The waves are too high," she objected, "and we should have to tie the wood on good and solid, for the way this thing dips and tips and turns it would all be off before we were out of the cove."

"The waves are high," he conceded, "and, of course, we should have to tie the wood on.

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This thing won't stay anywhere. What's left of it knows it used to be the side and it does n't understand that it is the bottom now."

"I'll tell you," she said; "let's wait till to-morrow. Maybe the wind will not pile the waves quite so high then, and we can tie your rope to it. See there is the hole in the prow they made to moor it by, and we can tow it round, if you like. That is splendid wood and it will certainly be easier getting it home that way than carrying it up over the hill."

But Delbert was not quite satisfied.

"I'll tell you," he said; "if we can get it around the point there, we can take it the other way, in back of the Island. It's a lot longer way, but there are no breakers in there."

"I guess we could do it that way all right. So let's go back now and braid palm-leaf ropes the rest of to-day, so as to have plenty to tie the wood with, and hunt up some nice poles and paddles; and to-morrow early we will come and take this gallant bark round into harbor."

So they beached it again, and piled stones in it so it could not get away, and then went back to the home end of the Island.

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Mexicans make a very good rope of twisted palm-leaves, but our islanders had not learned how yet, and so braided them instead, for even the children could do that. For a large rope they simply took three of the small ones and braided them together. The finished articles were very knobby, uneven affairs, of course, and could not be used to lasso with, but they were flexible and strong and served to tie things. They had quite a number of these ropes of home manufacture.

In the morning, after attending to the burro and eating a breakfast of fish baked in the hot coals, they filled the two big bottles and three of the little ones with water, tied stout little palm-leaf strings to them, so that each person could easily carry one, and started out with their ropes and poles.

Marian had Mr. Cunningham's pail with more fish for their dinner, and the hatchet also, and Davie as usual flourished the dig-spoon. He soon got tired of carrying his bottle of water and passed it over to Marian, who put it into the pail.

At the cove they put the pail and their bot-

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gles into a clump of mango bushes and began to gather up the best and biggest of the wood. Marian made compact bundles of it and lashed them as best she could to what remained of the old canoe. Alone it would not stay in any position that made it navigable, but reinforced by the bundles of wood on what Delbert called the "absent" side of the craft, it floated as any other mass of wooden wreckage would have floated and maintained an equilibrium which allowed the children to perch on top in safety.

Delbert scratched his head.

"This is n't a canoe and it is n't a raft. What in creation is it, anyway, Marian?"

"I reckon it's a float," she answered.

So, after the pail had been placed on the safest spot, where it would not get water splashed into it, and after Jennie had received explicit instructions to watch over it, the voyage began. They had taken the precaution to put on their bathing-suits and expected to do as much wading and swimming as anything else.

Marian knew a good deal about rowing and sailing a boat, but this was a different matter. To begin with, they had only one really good

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pole. The other was too short, besides being crooked, and their craft swung round and twisted and did its best to wobble its way back to the beach. At last, however, they got out quite a way, beyond the depth of the shortest



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pole, but when they came to round the point there was trouble again. Finally Marian jumped off and, half swimming, half wading to shore with the lariat, towed them round the point; and then, because they made better progress that way, accomplished most of the rest of the journey so.

Davie also preferred to do most of his traveling on his own feet, and Marian did not blame him, for the float did not even look like a safe craft, and the way it wobbled and bobbed might

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well have made an older passenger than Davie uneasy. So he trudged on, mostly in the edge of the water, now and then whimpering when he



MARIAN TOWED THEM ROUND THE POINT

hurt his bare toes and again laughing gleefully at some treasure of the sea which the fates cast at his feet.

At some places it was not convenient to tow the float, and then they resorted to poling altogether. At one or two points Delbert took the rope and swam across to a better place for pulling. And several times the bundles of wood became loosened, and all hands had to retire to shore till Marian could get them satisfactorily retied.

Altogether, their progress was so slow that

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the day was nearly done before they moored their gallant craft to the little rock pier behind the Island.

Next day they tried it another way. They took all the wood off and allowed the old fragment to turn turtle. That did a great deal better in some ways, but it was a little difficult to get aboard of it. Once they were aboard, however, it sustained the weight of them all well enough, though, of course, there was no free-board at all, and, while it was willing to remain in that position, the ends of the canoe, being well under water, offered considerable resistance and made it more difficult to pole than a boat or raft would have been.

Jennie thought Marian had better cut off those ragged ends and leave only the smooth side, but Marian was not anxious to attempt such a task as that with only a dull hatchet and a few knives to work with. Besides, she was not sure at all but she would some day want those ends right where they were. She could not think of any way of improving it, and even as it was it enlarged the horizon of their daily lives.

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The prow being under water, they could not very well use the hole in it to tie the rope to, but at one place in the bottom there was a knot-hole, and Marian firmly wedged a stick into that. With a rope fastened to this stick they could tie the canoe where it would float out quite a little distance from shore, and then they could swim out to it. She soon found her little flock were improving in their swimming lessons. With the old canoe at hand it did not matter so much if one did get beyond one's depth a little; it gave one security.

Then pretty soon, when they began to get the knack of making the old thing move along in the water where they wanted it to, they would go out to the little sandbars and reefs that had before been beyond their reach.

Some of these had mango bushes where a certain variety of small oyster attached themselves to the stems and rocks, where they could be easily gathered at low tide. One had an outcropping of rock in one place which had several basin-like depressions, which Marian cleaned out and made use of. She would boil down seawater in her kettle, till it was about a saturated

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solution, and then put it into the demijohn, and when that was full would take it over and empty it into those shallow rock basins, where the sun evaporated it till nothing was left but the salt.

Close on the heels of the food problem had come that of clothing. Marian thanked her stars that the soil of the Island was sandy and brushed off easily, but even with that in their favor they had not been on the Island so very long before their clothing sadly needed washing. She put her whole flock into their bathing-suits and washed everything else. But that made such inroads on her lone cake of soap that she decided things must do without soap in the future, and what dirt would not come out with water and sunshine would have to stay in. That went sorely against the grain, for Mrs. Hadley was a notoriously neat and clean woman and had trained her daughter in her own spick-and-span ways; but it could not be helped.

Before long it became plain that the question of washing was not all there was to it either. Clothes constantly worn will in time wear out, and Marian's little flock soon became shabby as well as dingy. She staved off the evil day for a

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while by decreeing that the bathing-suits must be worn all the time, and so the other clothes were folded away up at the Cave, to await the blest day when some one should wander into San Moros and take them all back to the Port.

The children were willing enough. It did away with the need of dressing and undressing, for they had so little bedding that Marian let them sleep in their suits too. Davie could not see any use in clothes anyway, except when he was cold. Before long he rebelled against even the little bathing-suit, and as there was no one to see and criticize, his sister let him run from morning till night absolutely naked. He was so fat and dimpled and sweet that the other children liked him best that way, and his little body became so tanned that Marian called him a little Indian, and because he strutted about in such a lordly way she dubbed him Hiawatha. That tickled Delbert, who then tied his little brother's hair in tufts and stuck them full of feathers.

Delbert himself began to need the barber's services, but when Jennie told him so one day he declared he was not going to have his hair

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cut, he was going to let it grow long and make fishlines of it.

"You'll look fine," said she, scornfully; "a boy with pigtails; you'd better cut it, Marian."

But Marian, with a mental vision of how fine he would look after she had barbered him with the buttonhole scissors, decided in favor of pigtails.

So Delbert tied a string about his forehead, stuck feathers in it, and demanded an Indian name. Marian named him Chingachgook. Of course the little girls wanted Indian names too, so she told Jennie she could be Wahtawah and Esther Pocahontas.

They were very much pleased and went straightway to hunt up some feathers, though Delbert declared that squaws never wore them.

"Never mind," said Marian soothingly, "these squaws can do anything they have a mind to."

She herself did not adopt a name, but Delbert used to call her the great squaw chief.

As for shelter, they never found on the Island a better place than that which they had fortunately secured the first night. The bat cave near the water's edge was the only other cave

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of any considerable size, and nothing else would have afforded any security whatever from a storm. Whenever it was convenient, Marian reinforced the brush shade in front of the Cave. She had it good and thick now, but of course it would not have turned a rain. The nights were getting cooler, and she cast about for ways and means of getting more bedding. She pounded sticks and dried banana leaves into the Cave where it ran back and became too narrow for their feet. She blocked up the sides with rocks and pieces of driftwood and filled in the chinks with little wads of banana leaves, so that the wind was shut out better. She saved the feathers from the birds they killed, and tied them up in the little girls' petticoats for pillows, and she saved every rabbit-skin and stretched it out so that it dried smoothly, scraping it as clean as she could, and when it was almost dry, rubbed and worked it till it was soft and pliable. This, of course, was not the same as having them tanned, but she did not know how to tan leather, much as she wished she did.

After she had learned how to keep herself supplied with salt, she used to rub that on the

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fresh skins when she stretched them out to dry, believing that was one good step toward preserving them. When she had quite a number all finished up in this manner, she trimmed the edges a little and sewed them together. In the course of time she would have a robe large enough to cover them all, and as long as she could keep it dry it would not spoil.

Delbert was interested in bows and arrows. His first efforts at making bows were not startling successes, by any means, and he soon turned them over to Wahtawah and Pocahontas and tried for better ones for himself. At first he used any and every kind of a straight smooth stick he ran across, and it seemed almost impossible to find any that combined the necessary straightness and strength, but when he finally caught the idea of making them of palm-leaf stems, which are very tough and strong, he evolved one that would actually shoot quite effectively.

Then his sisters straightway clamored for good bows also, and he must needs make for them too. He was at first a little scornful, but Marian advised that he arm them as well as

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possible, for while the chances of their bagging any game were slim in any case, there was simply no chance at all with bows that were only toys. Bowstrings were made from Marian's hair, but arrow-points were a puzzling problem. The boys at the Port had tipped their arrows with heavy wire, but wire was not an Island commodity. Marian suggested bone, and a few were made of that material, but it was so very hard to work, and the knives needed so much whetting, that they were constantly on the lookout for something easier. Finally they learned to make them of wood hardened in the fire.

The first bows made were now Davie's property, and he was so reckless with his shooting that Marian forbade points of any description being put on his arrows. He did not seem to mind the omission, — he never hit anything except by accident, and then it was usually one of the other children, and they were all careful not to call his attention to the fact that his arrows were all blunt.

Davie was the only one who was not at times more or less depressed by their situation. He was so little, and had now been separated from

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his mother so long, that he never fretted for her. Marian had always taken the most of the care of him anyway, so as long as she was there to do it he considered that conditions were normal. He found life very interesting and satisfactory and felt no need of more extensive society. His comical baby ways were closely watched and intensely enjoyed by the other children, who loved him dearly, and they would eagerly report to Marian everything funny he did when she was not present. Even when he was naughty, which he occasionally was, they were rather apt to overlook it and laugh at the funny spectacle he made of himself. Delbert, though, would get provoked sometimes.

One trick the little fellow had when His Majesty was displeased was to hide the whetstone. This was a stone which he himself had picked up out on one of the salt reefs. It was a little different from any other that they had found and was splendid to sharpen the knives and hatchet with. Delbert used to make quite an ado over borrowing it from Davie, because it pleased him so to have something apparently so valuable to lend. Marian, too, was careful

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to say, "Please lend me your whetstone, Davie," before she rubbed her knife over it, and as a rule he would beamingly give permission. That and the dig-spoon were about the only things that were considered especially his, and as it was not often that any one else used the dig-spoon, he did not bother much about it; but when he felt naughty he would conceal the little stone and refuse to reveal its whereabouts.

Sometimes Delbert would use some other stone then, or he would coolly wait until Davie got over his pouts and brought forth the good one, or else he would slyly hunt it up and use it without Davie's knowledge, carefully replacing it when he had finished.

But one day he could not find it, and Davie simply would not get it. Marian herself wanted it too, but Davie resisted even her coaxing. Delbert lost all patience, and Marian began to wonder on the second day if some measure more strenuous than common might not be needed. She began to think that perhaps the child himself did not know where it was; it might possibly be that he had lost it instead of hiding it. He was so little and his speech was so limited as yet

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that she did not always feel sure that she understood him perfectly. Perhaps he simply did not want to admit that he had not been bright enough to keep track of the valuable thing himself. But then Esther saw him playing with the stone off by himself. When she ran to tell Marian, however, he hid it again and only smiled impishly at their requests.

No, he was simply being naughty, and, what was worse, was staying naughty; so after a little Marian issued her verdict.

"I won't punish him, though I could probably make him get it by spanking him, but mother never did that to him, and I will not till I really have to, but the next time any of you see that whetstone you may take it from him and I will confiscate it and it won't be his stone any more."

"But," said Jennie dubiously, "*it is his stone; he found it, Marian.*"

"That is true," returned her sister, "and if it were some less necessary thing I would say he had a right to do as he chose with it, but a whetstone is something we all need. I need it to sharpen the hatchet with; nothing else I can

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find does so well. Delbert needs it right now to sharpen his knife, so he can work out that bone arrowhead. It is to Davie's interest as well as ours that the hatchet and knives should be sharp, only he is so little he can't realize it. Just because he saw the stone first does not give him a right to hide it away and refuse to let us use it, when we all need the use of it and there is not another one like it that we know of."

She explained this all as well as she could to Davie, but he remained obdurate. They set themselves to work, therefore, to ferret out the much-needed implement, and before long Delbert found it and brought it in triumph to Marian, who took possession of it amid Davie's loud wails.

His crying availed him nothing, however; the stone was put in a cleft of the rock where only Marian and Delbert could reach it, and the young would-be monopolist finally decided that it was not worth crying for, and, smoothing out his face, trotted about his affairs as sweetly important as ever.

CHAPTER V

THE EGG ISLANDS

It was now growing close to that time so dear to children's hearts, — and grown people's, too, for that matter, — namely, Christmas.

The Hadleys had always made much of it, and, hampered as she was, Marian determined to celebrate in some manner. She had had to let Thanksgiving go by unnoticed, for the especial rite of that day is a loaded dinner-table, and she had bowed to the inevitable, but, though good dinners are in order of a Christmas Day, they are not the entire programme, and Marian's fertile brain grew busy.

In her workbag was the roll of fine lawn of which she had been making handkerchiefs. One was partly made, and with careful planning there was enough material to make three more, leaving a few little scraps. In off moments, when the children were engaged in making love to the baby burro or busy at play on the beach, she hemmed the handkerchiefs, and then with

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her colored silks outlined Mother Goose pictures on them and wrote the children's names in the corners. So far, so good.

Then she constructed three little dolls, each doll being made of one straight bone with a knob at one end that would do for the head, with a wishbone tied below to make the arms. One doll had wishbone legs too, but that exhausted the supply of wishbones, and the other two had to be content with legs that were not so nicely matched. Faces and hair she made with the lead-pencil, and little suits of underwear from the scraps of lawn, and she cut a piece out of the ruffle of her colored petticoat for the dresses and three cunning little sunbonnets. For Delbert she whittled out a little boat about three inches long and rigged it out with silken ropes and a lawn sail.

On Christmas Eve she gathered them about her in front of their fire up by the Cave, and told them Christmas stories till they were sleepy, and, to their glee, had them hang up their stockings before they crawled into the Cave and cuddled into bed.

Somewhat to her surprise, they insisted that

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she hang up her stocking too, which she did, wondering much what they had planned to surprise her with, for she knew now, by their dancing eyes and loving voices, that they had planned something, though she had not noticed anything mysterious in their behavior before.

In the morning she was careful to go down to the well for a pail of water the first thing, so as to give them a chance to fill her stocking, and, sure enough, upon her return she found it full to overflowing.

It seemed that for several weeks back Delbert and the little girls had been saving every pretty shell and feather they found for this purpose and they had accumulated a large assortment.

Shells, feathers, crabs' claws and seaweed,—how sharp their bright eyes had been to spy out every pretty thing they passed! How industriously the little hands had gathered!

Marian's heart swelled. How she praised that collection! And straightway after breakfast she hunted up a nice, safe, dry little cleft in the rock, a sort of a baby cave, where she arranged them all, sorting the feathers and tying them in bunches, and when all was in order fitted one

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of the little boards they had found in the cove in front for a door, so nothing should disturb the treasures.

That morning, out on one of the salt reefs, they found a log in among the mango bushes, where it had hitherto lain unseen. Marian judged that it had been tossed there by the storm the night of their arrival, for it did not appear to have lain there so very long.

Of course, they worked and tugged till they had it in the water, and it was so much of an improvement over the old canoe that they straightway discarded that, — Marian later working it into the corral, — and every day they went out on the log.

It floated in shallower water than the canoe and was easily poled or paddled wherever they wished to go, but it had two drawbacks; first, it had nothing to which the rope could be tied to moor it, — but that really did not matter much for they could roll it up on the beach out of reach of the water; but for the second, it was so round and smooth that it was forever rolling over and spilling some one off into the water, and this drawback simply had to be put up with.

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One morning, down in the cove, Delbert found a small watermelon. Probably it had been lost overboard from some steamer passing by out in the Gulf, for it was many a long league to where such things were grown, yet in any case it seemed a wonderful thing that, with all that waste of tossing water, that little melon, scarce as large as Marian's head, should have drifted into San Moros and then into their cove. It was ripe and they ate it, gnawing down the rind to the very outside. Ordinarily Marian would not have allowed that, but so small a melon divided into five pieces did not give a very large piece to each one, and they were hungry for something besides animal food, and had not found a really *good* bunch of bananas yet.

They saved the seeds of the melon and decided to plant a patch with them, though they hoped to be rescued long before they could eat of the fruits of their labor. To plant the patch would give them something new to do, and perhaps some one else would be benefited by the crop even if they were not.

Marian had never been much of a gardener, but she thought the long, low, sandy point would

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be a good place to plant, for by digging down a little there they would reach soil that was always damp with the fresh water underneath; so the garden would not need irrigation, and she had heard some one say that sandy soil was good for melons.

Delbert remembered reading in his history that the North American Indians used to put a fish in each hill of corn for fertilizer, and he wanted to try it. But fish were not so easily secured as to warrant that; they were growing scarce in High-Tide Pool, and in other places they were not very hungry somehow, and it was rare, indeed, when Delbert could manage to spear one with his one-pronged spear.

However, the traps were gathering in rabbits pretty frequently, and the discarded portions of these could be used instead. So they planted their melon-patch, digging holes down to the damp soil and planting the seeds in the bottoms with a little fertilizer near. Marian saved half the seeds in case the planting should not prosper and should have to be done over again.

When they had finished that labor and were proudly viewing their neat rows of melon holes,

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Delbert suddenly exclaimed, "Say, Marian! I bet I know where we could get some more vegetable seeds."

"For pity's sake, where?"

In my coat pocket. Don't you remember when Bobbie's father sent off for seeds, and they were so long in coming, and the rats had got to 'em somewhere on the road and chewed holes in the papers, and the seeds were all spilling out? Well, I helped Bobbie carry them home from the office, and we put them in our coat pockets, some of them, and I'll bet there are some of those seeds in my pockets yet."

Straight they went to the Cave and turned every pocket wrong side out over a white cloth and with miserly care saved every tiny seed that fell. There was in all nearly a teaspoonful. Marian separated them, putting each kind in a clamshell by itself.

There were seven kinds. One was peas; there were just three of them. They were not sure of the others, though Jennie rather thought one kind was eggplant, and Marian was pretty sure another was onions.

Down in a corner by the bananas was the place

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chosen for this second planting. They built a fence around it, a rather frail affair, but specially designed to keep out rabbits, and they sprinkled the beds twice a day. All three of the peas sprouted, but something ate them up. What Marian had thought was onions never came up at all, but the remaining five kinds all sprouted and grew well, and though their ranks were diminished by various bugs and birds, — for Marian could not be on guard every minute of the time, — there were a few plants of each kind that survived all accidents.

Jennie's eggplant turned out to be big sweet peppers; the other plants proved to be turnip, carrots, lettuce, and — poppies. Delbert could never understand about that last, for he was very sure Bobbie's father had sent only for vegetable seeds, but Marian thought Bobbie's mother had probably had something to do with the list of seeds ordered.

The melons did best of all. There were so few of the others that Marian vetoed all eating till the seeds could be gathered, but the melon-patch produced abundantly, so that they did not have to worry about seeds, but began eating as soon

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as the centers were pinkish, and only saved seeds from the best ones that came later.

But long before the melons were ripe, their scanty larder had been replenished from a totally different direction.

"Marian," Delbert had said, "those little white-looking islands away down the bay are duck islands. Clarence told me so, and I can see the ducks going to them every day. Wish we could go there; duck eggs are good, I tell you."

Away down San Moros they could see them, two little islands, mere trifles compared with Smugglers', and so far away that ordinarily Marian would not have wasted a moment on thoughts of a journey there, but eggs, perhaps young ducks, and here were her hungry little crew gazing wistfully. "Ducks" the children called them, and it was not till long afterward that they learned that the birds were really cormorants. If they had known this at the time, they might not have been so hungry for the eggs, but cormorants' eggs, like the eggs of other seabirds, are not uneatable when one is hungry enough, and they are often eaten by fishermen.

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The young girl thought and studied and made ropes and looked toward the "duck islands." Every morning long lines of birds went out from them to the sea; every evening long lines came back.

On those two islands thousands of these "ducks" were nesting.

All of her charges could swim now; even Davie could help himself a little in the water. If only the log did not turn over in the water so easily and often! If that could be remedied, Marian thought they might risk the voyage. She and Delbert could easily steer the craft now. They had picked and chosen among the few poles at their disposal, till they had three that seemed pretty good, — one longish one for poling, two others that served in a fashion as paddles. Jennie and Esther could use them a little.

Then a full week was spent in cutting down banana plants and fixing them in the corral fence so as to release the poles that were in it, and this was the time too when the old canoe was put into the fence.

Those big poles, though not nearly so large as the log, were now laid parallel to it and tightly

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lashed on, making an extension on each side that would prevent the log rolling over, so that, while they could not ride on it and keep dry, they could at least ride it in safety. They could not now roll the craft up the beach, but it could easily be moored by tying a rope to one of the poles. Good ropes were scarce, though; it had taken the best ones to lash the queer raft together.

Marian's mind was now fully made up for the venture. They started early. The old barrel was tied on, also the broken demijohn. Fire to cook their dinner with was a question. Marian did not want to risk taking the matches for fear they would get wet by some unlucky accident, so she put a quantity of ashes in the barrel and buried some good half-burned brands in them. And because they did not know for sure whether they would find wood on the "duck islands" or not, they took along a little bundle of sticks too. They had learned that the trunks of the banana plants contain a tough, strong fiber, and they were using this for tying, where short strings were wanted.

Their breakfast consisted of cold boiled cotton-

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tail left over from supper and a few small and very inferior bananas. These they ate on the raft after they had started, and they drank from the bottles of water which had also been put into the old barrel. It was not a very ample meal, and they turned longing eyes on the distant islands. It was devoutly to be hoped that food was plenty there.

The sea was very smooth; Marian would not have started if it had not been. The raft was easily paddled along, and she soon lost the few nervous misgivings with which she began the trip, but she also soon decided that she would never make it again till she had studied up some way of putting up a sail. She was quite sure that Clarence would have done it, and it did seem as if it would take forever to get across that stretch of water.

However, they reached their destination before noon, and, drawing their odd craft up on a bit of beach, they took everything ashore and hunted a good place for a fire. Having found one, they carefully drew the embers from their bed of ashes and, with much coaxing and blowing and pulling of handfuls of dried grass,

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finally got a little blaze started, and then they hung the kettle over it with water to heat for the eggs which they then went to hunt.



THE GROUND WAS COVERED WITH THE ROUGH NESTS

They had to climb a little to reach the eggs, but there were certainly plenty of them when they got there. The ground was covered with the rough nests, — just a few sticks with no art in the construction, — but there were hundreds upon hundreds of them, far beyond the children's

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power to count. There were eggs in all stages of incubation from fresh-laid to fully hatched, and awkward squabs tumbled about, while the air was rent by the discordant cries of the older ones.

The unpleasant odor arising was so strong that Jennie sickened and quickly retreated to the beach below, where the fresh air was untainted, but Esther and Davie were undaunted by the noise or the smell and remained to be taught the difference between fresh eggs and stale ones. The eggs were smaller than the ordinary hen's egg, being more slender and pointed, with a pale-blue chalkiness, which was not so apparent in eggs that had been for some time sat upon.

Neither Delbert nor Marian had seen these islands before or any others like them, but Clarence had, and they remembered his teaching and soon had all the fresh eggs they could carry away. Delbert also picked out a couple of half-grown squabs, whose necks he wrung as soon as he reached the beach; and soon they had their kettle full of eggs simmering, while the squabs roasted before the fire.

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Cormorants' eggs have a slight fishy flavor, but the Hadley appetite did not stick at that, nor at the fact that the white does not coagulate solid, but remains a quivering jelly of a pale-



DELBERT PICKED OUT A COUPLE OF HALF-GROWN SQUABS

green color, through which the yellow yolk can be plainly seen. The flavor of the squabs, too, might not have been appreciated at Delmonico's, but Marian's company was not so fastidious as some people are. That which could be eaten they ate without ado.

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And after they had eaten all they wanted, they examined the island. There was nothing of importance upon it but the birds and the eggs. There was some driftwood, to be sure, which they threw up on the high banks out of reach of the tides, in case they might want it some time; and down on the narrow little beaches the children found great numbers of little clamshells, from the size of Davie's little fingernail up to as large as a quarter, and of various assorted colors, which they gathered with great enjoyment.

Their fire at home having been carefully covered as usual, they did not need to take any embers back with them, and so used the ashes to pack eggs in, putting into the barrel and the old demijohn all they thought they could use up before they would spoil. It took several trips up to the nests to get enough, and they took a dozen half-grown squabs as well. These, with their legs tied together, were also put into the barrel, where in spite of all precautions they managed to break quite a number of eggs before they were landed at Smugglers'.

As it chanced, they had a tide in their favor

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on the way home, and they arrived in good time. They carried their eggs up to the Cave and they picketed the squabs out, tying each one where it could not get entangled with its neighbors.

Their supper consisted of eggs and some quail that had got into the traps during their absence, and as they sat about their cozy fire up at the Cave, Marian felt that the day had been well spent.

It took considerable planning to contrive a sail for the raft. To begin with, there was nothing at all suitable for a mast, and, secondly, there was nothing suitable for a sail. The hatchet, too, was by this time very dull and needed a great deal of sharpening. Delbert said he had seen Indian canoes with an oar for a mast and a blanket for a sail, and they could use a blanket also and perhaps could make shift with a pole of some description in lieu of an oar; but even then it needed ropes, and they had used all theirs in lashing the raft together, and there were no more palm-leaves till more should grow. It was then they resorted to banana fiber entirely. It took considerable time to work it out nice and clean, but they finally got serviceable ropes of it.

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With a great deal of bracing and tying of crooked poles, they succeeded at last in rigging up a sail that very materially assisted them in making several other trips to the bird islands before the nesting-season was over.

But to carry live coals with them when they went away from the home island was a nuisance, and Marian did not want to use the matches except in case of absolute necessity. Besides, there was danger of getting them wet if they were taken on the raft, for nothing on that craft was sure of not receiving a bath sooner or later on every trip, and often everything and everybody got ducked several times; even what was in the barrel was not always secure.

The children wanted Marian to try building a fire with the crystal of her watch, but she did not want to take that off for fear of getting dirt in the works.

"But there are other ways," she told them. "Our grandparents used to make fire with a flint and steel. Let's watch for flints."

"Why, I've got a flint now in my pocket," said Jennie. "Carmelita gave it to me. She said her father lit his cigarettes with it, but he

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had bought him another one." She produced a bit of stone as big as the end of her thumb.

Marian examined it.

"This is too small," she said. "It has been used till it is nearly all chipped away; there is hardly enough of it left to hang on to."

"Why won't any stone do?" asked Jennie, as she pocketed her treasure.

"I guess because flint is harder than other stone. It has to be hard enough to shave off a little shaving of steel you know. That is what the spark is, a tiny shaving of steel that is afire."

"Where'd we get steel?" asked Esther.

"Oh, the knives are all steel."

"And the dig-spoon?"

"No, that is only iron. It is n't just the same thing, Pocahontas, and I'm sure if we keep our eyes open we can find little pieces of flint that will do."

That, indeed, was not difficult. They soon had a collection of bits of flint, some of which, indeed, were actual arrowheads dropped in some age long gone by.

Then Marian tried over and over to strike sparks from the bits of flint and the backs of

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the knives; sometimes a weak little spark would fly out only to disappear immediately, and no kindling she could get would ignite. They had seen Mexicans light their cigarettes by this method time and again, but the Mexican has a prepared wick which catches the spark and burns on till it is put out.

Marian tried to make a wick from strips of rag torn from the towel, but it was of no avail. She was not very successful in striking a spark in the first place, and she never could retain one for a second after it was struck.

"I believe we've got to be more primitive still," she said to Delbert. "The real wild Indian makes his fire by rubbing two sticks together."

Something distracted her attention then, and she thought no more about it till Delbert came to her a half-hour later, flushed and tired and disgusted.

"Marian," he said, "I don't believe any Indian *ever* made two sticks light by rubbing them together!"

"Have you been trying it?" she asked.

"Yes, and I've rubbed and rubbed and *rubbed*,

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and they don't light at all." He showed the sticks that he had been rubbing broadside against broadside till they were quite nicely polished.

Marian had to laugh.

"Dear boy, they don't do it that way," she said. "I don't know that I can do it, but I saw it done once. I truly did. Do you remember that man — I don't suppose you do, though, you were so little, but he was uncle to the lady that lived in the white house just across the stream there where we lived before Ronald died."

"I remember the white house," said Delbert, "and the lady, — Mrs. Walton, was n't it? She had the funny cats with long hair and she always had pink ribbons on their necks."

"Angora cats. Yes, I remember she had a couple. Well, her uncle came to visit her once, and he had been agent or something out on an Indian reservation, and he knew all kinds of Indian things that the Walton boys wanted to know, and so he used to tell them about these things, and I took it all in whenever I was there. He knew how to scalp a dead enemy, and how to tie a live one to a horse so he could n't get

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away. I remember those two things distinctly, and he explained about smoking a peace pipe, and how to tell which way you were going when you got lost, and also — how to make a fire with two sticks.”

“Well, I just want you to show me; that’s all!”

“All right, we’ll try it. That man told just what kind of wood to use, but I’ve forgotten that, and probably we could n’t get the same kind anyway. I guess this piece will do to begin with, and if it does n’t work we’ll try some other kind. Now, it wants a nice smooth, round stick. Give me your knife; I can whittle better with it than I can with the other one. Let me see, it needs a — where is that broken bottle that Davie was playing with that just had the rounded bottom left on it? That’s it. You see, now, we have this stick about a foot long, and we smooth one end off nicely, and we make the other one pointed, then we make a little notch in this other stick and down like that. Where is your bow? I believe that is too big. Give me Jennie’s and tighten the string on it. Now I put this big stick with the notches down where I can hold it

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firm with my foot, so, and take a turn of the bowstring around the little round stick, so, and — give me that piece of bottle — I put it over the top end of the round stick so it can revolve smoothly, which it could not do in the palm of my hand, — at least, not without wearing my hand out, — and I fit the pointed end into the top notch I made in the other stick, so. Now, you will see how quick we'll have a fire here."

She started drawing the bow back and forth, thereby twirling the stick first one way and then the other, and she whirled and whirled and whirled it till her arm fairly ached; but nothing came of it. She took a rest and tried again. This time she produced smoke and charred the sticks a little, but still no fire.

"Perhaps it is n't the right kind of wood." said Delbert.

That was the beginning of their effort to make fire without matches. It was fascinating. With some sticks the smoke would curl up thick and white till Marian's eyes fairly smarted with it, but no fire appeared. Delbert tried it, the little girls tried it, and Davie, with great gravity and earnestness, tried it too.

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They whittled sticks constantly in the endeavor to get one just right. Then the craze died out for a few days; but it was taken up again. Marian was sure that she was doing it just as the Walton's boys' uncle had done it, and he had produced fire in a very short time, — not more than a minute, she was sure. She studied over the problem. It seemed as if with so much smoke and charring it simply must ignite, but it did not. She would rub and rub, till there would be a teaspoonful of brown powdered wood at the foot of her downward notch, but never a spark. She would drop the implements in disgust and go at something else, but always next day, or the next, she returned to them and tried again.

She had seen it done and she herself could produce a little wreath of smoke, while her implements grew hot and actually charred. She tried with every kind of driftwood that seemed different from what she had used before, and while up in the pasture she would cut sticks from the different growing shrubs and dry them in the hot sun to experiment with. Then, one day, as she watched the little pile of black powder

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fall from her twirling stick, she saw a bit of it turn to a red glow and knew that she had succeeded.

How they scurried for kindlings and coaxed that tiny bit of brightness! It glowed and glowed till all the black powder was burned, and then it went out. Well, having once done it, of course she could do it again, and next time she would be prepared and have fine stuff ready to kindle with.

So she tried again and again and again, till her arm ached and her breath came in gasps. And the children would squat in a circle, their bright eyes glued to the tiny pile of powdered charred wood, and Esther, with unvarying monotony, would ask, "Why does n't it light, Marian? Did before"; and presently, "Why does n't it light, Marian? Did before."

It was fully a week after the first success before she achieved the second one, and then also, in spite of her best and most earnest endeavor, she could not kindle it any farther, and when the charred powder was exhausted it went out.

Of course, she could not spend all her time

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upon it, but every day there would be a trial of it sandwiched in between other labors.

She took particular notice of the wood she was using when success crowned her efforts. The little round stick was from a piece of drift-wood. She did not know what it was, but it was a soft wood that whittled easily, and the base piece was from a kind of tree cactus called *echo*.¹

After a while she became so accomplished that she could produce fire about every tenth time she tried, and in course of time she became much more expert than that. She always used *echo* for her base piece, and for the other she found that a certain bush up in the pasture was best. She could cut sticks from it and dry them, and they were straight and round and smooth without any whittling.

Also she learned that a handful of grass so old and dry that it had all turned gray, if it were broken and rubbed till it was very fine, made good kindling. With a handful of that over her precious coal of fire, she could, with careful coaxing, get a blaze, and then it was easy to build on with other material.

¹ Pronounced *ay' tcho*.

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Having once learned how, she felt easier. She laid up pieces of the selected wood in several places on the Island, where they would keep dry, — carried some away back into the bat cave for one place, — besides having a good supply tucked away in the home Cave.

When they went away from the Island, they would take a couple of the fire-sticks with them along with Delbert's arrows. They used to tie them high up on the mast to keep them out of the way of spray and splashings, and Marian would slip the bottle-bottom into her pocket. The glass was somewhat clumsy, however, and there was danger of cutting her fingers on it, and afterwards they found some shells — big barnacles, I think they were — which served the purpose just as well and were neater and safer to handle.

Dried grass they could always find; so they could have a fire whenever they wanted it without using the matches, which were dropped into the workbag to await some possible emergency. On the Island, however, they found it more convenient to bury the brands from one fire over to another, as they had done before.

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Their trips to the egg islands, however, did not wait on all of this. As before mentioned, there were two of these islands. On the farther and smaller of the two they found several things that proved of value. It was the one the nearer to the mainland, and some time or other there had been a house or camp of some description on it. They found the blackened stones where the food had been cooked over the fire and some broken fragments of pottery such as the natives use, and, not far away, some scraps of iron so broken and rusty that they could not make up their minds what they had been, but Marian saved them.

Growing near were shrubs and bushes like those in their own pasture, but Delbert found one bush that had two shoots longer and straighter than any he had yet seen, and when cut and trimmed they made better spear-handles than the one he had been using. And at low tide they found there the largest oysters they had yet discovered anywhere.

When back at their own camp, Marian and Delbert resolutely attacked the job of making a better spear or harpoon than the one they had.

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It seemed to the girl that if one only understood a little of blacksmithing, one of the pieces of iron could be altered a little and made into a very respectable spear-head, and perhaps, if one did not understand, one could learn a little.

She could easily poke the iron into the fire till it grew red-hot. To handle it afterwards was the question. She and Delbert were both afraid of getting burned, and wasted much time because of that fear.

They rigged up a rude pair of tongs with some green sticks and a little rope, and, using the hatchet for a hammer and a flat stone for an anvil, they began work. It was intensely interesting.

The experiment in "duck"-raising proved unsuccessful, for the cormorant squabs which they brought home alive would eat nothing but fish, and as each one of them demanded more than his own weight in food every day, the children soon found that the task of keeping them fed was a hopeless one. They killed them all off at once, therefore, and had such a feast of "duck" that they were content to do without that particular kind of meat for some time to come.

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They had plenty of eggs and clams, however, and an occasional quail or rabbit; so they did not need to waste any time searching for food. Davie and the little girls wandered off to play with the little bone dolls or the baby burro. Marian glanced toward them or stopped to listen sometimes, but the sight of their little forms near by or the sound of their sweet, childish voices reassured her, and she continued with the task in hand.

A man who understood such things would have done much better even with those rude tools. Time and again it seemed to the girl that she could do no better, go no further in the task; then some idea would come to one or the other of them, and they would work awhile longer. A full week went by before the new tool was finished, a two-pronged affair, one prong a little longer than the other and of a different shape, but both sharp and barbed. It fastened quite snugly to the straightest of the new handles.

After that she and Delbert went spearing at night in the little harbor, when the tide was just right and the children were asleep. They would go out on the raft where there were mango

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bushes, but for this they had to have a torch-light at one end of the raft.

They had often seen the Indians at the Port start out at night with great piles of *pitalla* in their canoes to burn in a huge wire and iron basket, which would cast a bright circle of light for quite a space around, in which the fish could be plainly seen. Marian thought that the light attracted them.

This *pitalla* is a kind of tree cactus the bark of which is very resinous and when dry burns with a very hot, bright flame. They could gather it in the pasture, but they had no wire basket and nothing to make one of. The best, it seemed, that they could do was to make a mat of green banana leaves and mud on the poles and build the fire on that.

It was very unsatisfactory, for the water was forever washing over it and putting it out. Necessity is the mother of invention, however, and after a while Marian hunted in the pasture till she found four little crotches of the same size, which she cut and trimmed and then fastened on the extreme end of the log by tying them above and below it and to one another. Then,

by laying little sticks across them, she made a platform which rose about three feet above the surface of the water. She made it quite tight by weaving in stout twigs and banana leaves and stems, and when it was finished, she plastered it over with the slimiest mud she could find, and on that laid thin flat rocks, fitting them with care so that their edges projected past the edge of the platform and filling in the little chinks with mud and pebbles. On that when it was finished, she could build her fire with safety, for it was up out of reach of the water. It was not so good as the iron basket of the Indians, for it was clumsier, it cast a shadow on the water, and there was likelihood of its needing frequent repairs; but it would serve. The supply of fuel could be kept dry by putting it into the barrel, which was tied on so that its open side and end were upward.

When they were first left on the Island, Marian would not have dared take those night trips. She would not have dared leave the children alone at the Cave for one thing, but in all the time that they had been there they had seen nothing which could have harmed them

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save the one rattlesnake which Delbert had killed.

From the Cave they had cleared three paths, — one to the beach, one to the garden and the little pier, and one toward the pasture. This last had needed no clearing beyond the cutting-out of two or three bushes. The path to the pier had been mostly a matter of clearing away loose stones, and it was easy to follow even in the dark.

However, it was only when Davie was sleepy that the children were left at the Cave. When he gave promise of being able to keep awake, they all went together. Marian would place him on the log between the little girls and give them strict instructions that they were not to let go of him. Then she and Delbert would take turns with the spear and the steering of the craft.

And when she had her little flock all with her, Marian would venture out beyond the little harbor, where the water was shallow and the mango bushes were thicker, and as long as their fuel lasted they would stay out.

It was a weird scene, — the star-dotted sky above, the black, whispering water below, the

clumsy raft in the light of the hot fire swept back by the breeze, the slender, eager-eyed, half-naked boy watching keenly, as mass after mass of the mango bushes came into the circle of their light. Marian generally guided the raft, for she was better at that than Delbert, who seemed about as successful as she with the spear.

Not that either of them had any startling success. Indeed, for a long time it always seemed accidental, more the fish's fault than theirs, when one became impaled upon the iron prongs. But the sport was exciting, and there was always the need that lay back of it to keep their interest spurred up, and after a while they both learned to strike quickly and with force, so that, with constant practice, the time came when a night's spearing meant enough fish for one meal at least, and, if luck was with them, for more.

They had better luck with the spear at night than with the line in the daytime, for the hair-pin hook was very inadequate and big fish were forever straightening it out. When a fish was speared, they put it into the barrel with the fuel, where one of the girls held a piece of drift-wood over it till the wildest of its flopping was past.



THEY HAD BETTER LUCK WITH THE SPEAR AT NIGHT THAN WITH
THE LINE IN THE DAYTIME

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Davie generally fell asleep, and then it took the whole attention of Jennie to hold him safe. Indeed, Marian would not risk him with just that, and used to take a rope along to tie him when he finally dozed off. He objected strenuously to being tied as long as he was awake enough to know it, but, once he was asleep, she could moor him securely, and Jennie could devote herself to keeping him cuddled and covered, with no fear that he would roll out of her hands when the raft careened with some of the spearman's wild lunges.

When they had as many fish as they wanted, or, more often, when their fuel was exhausted, they would paddle back to the little pier, moor the raft, wash the fishiness off their hands and climb back up to the Cave, where they would cuddle down in bed and quickly go to sleep.

Then in the quiet, as she thought of her mother, Marian's eyes would fill with tears and her outstretched hand would pass lovingly over each little form. "Safe as yet," she would whisper, "and, O mother, I promise to keep them safe till I can give them back to you again."

CHAPTER VI

THE JAGUAR'S TRACK

ONE day, while poking her inquisitive little nose into Marian's workbag, Esther fished up five or six knobby, roundish little lumps, demanding, "What are these, Marian?"

"Nasturtium seeds," replied Marian carelessly.

"'Sturtium seeds?"

"Yes."

"Why, Marian," reproachfully; "why haven't you been planting 'em? Don't you know 'sturtium seeds are good to eat?"

Marian gazed steadily for a moment at the seeds in the little girl's outstretched hand, then she slowly took them into her own.

"Pocahontas," she said solemnly, "I never thought of that. Of course they are good to eat, — the seeds, leaves, flowers, stems, and all. We'll plant them before the sun goes down to-night."

"You're a great squaw chief, you are," said

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Esther scornfully. "Jennie! Dellie! Looky, here's 'sturtium seeds been in Marian's bag all this time, an' she never thought of planting 'em."

Jennie and Delbert came up excitedly. Jennie, too, was rather inclined to scorn at such evidence of Marian's lack of thought, but Delbert threw his arms around her and planted vehement kisses on her cheeks.

"You shan't scold her," he declared. "She's the best squaw chief ever was. Nobody could do better, *nobody* could, and I love her!"

"So do I! So do I!" shrieked the girls, rushing in to contribute their share of affectionate demonstration, and Davie, dropping the dig-spoon, ran up, crying, "Do I! Do I!" in parrot-like refrain; and Marian, laughing, had much ado to keep from being knocked down with the onslaught.

But the seeds were straightway planted, and in time became a profusion of red and gold and green which delighted the eyes, and incidentally the palates, of Marian's nestful of hungry little hawks, as she called them.

In time also came warm weather and rains, and in some respects this bettered their condition and in some respects it made it worse.

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With warm weather they needed less bedding and less clothing at all times. Moreover, the rains made things grow. In the pasture there were several things that they knew to be good for greens, and they gathered a mess of some kind every day, boiling them with salt, and wondering how it had been that they had once upon a time thought that greens must have butter and vinegar to be really good.

But the rains brought gnats and mosquitoes to some extent, and sometimes these were so bad among the mango bushes that they could take no comfort in fishing. Sometimes, too, they troubled them so that they could scarcely sleep of nights, though their Cave was so high up on the hill that there was usually a light breeze that drove away the insect invaders. When the pests were very bad, the tribe would draw the tablecloth over their faces or would throw grass and green leaves on the fire, making a "smudge" that would subdue their tormentors.

Marian thought the bananas had begun to respond a little to the cultivation she had given them in the way of thinning out their numbers. At any rate, they were bearing a slightly better

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class of fruit. As soon as a bunch ripened a little, the birds would promptly start in to take their share, and she would cut down the stalk and take the bunch up to the cave, where she could keep it safely covered up till it was ripe enough to be good eating.

With these and the greens and the water-melons she felt always sure of a sufficient commissary supply. Still, they were as keen as ever to detect new food. One day Delbert came in with several bulbs, or roots, that he had dug up in the pasture. He said they looked good enough to eat and he wanted to try them.

Marian was very doubtful, but finally put them to roast in the coals while they went down for their morning swim, intending to offer one to the baby burro when they got back. They had taught the burro to eat everything that they did, and Delbert had suggested that they try the new food on him first.

He was willing to be cautious, but he was not willing to let a perfectly good food lie in the ground unused because they were not courageous enough to find out about it. If the burro had no trouble with it, Marian herself would

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sample a little, but very cautiously. She would hold a little of it in her mouth awhile first and see if anything came of it, and if it seemed all right they would all eat a little.

They had a fine swim. There were nice little breakers on the open side of the Island that morning. The children would run out a little way, wait till the right moment, then turn dextrously and let the foamy wave sweep them up on the beach. Marian kept hold of Davie, for the water was far too rough to trust his safety to his own little legs, sturdy though they were. But, with her to hold his hand, he had no fear, and laughed as loudly as the rest when the water slapped him off his feet and swept him up with the seaweed and the crabs. After a while he said he was tired and wanted to go and dig; so his sister let go of him, and he trotted off to where he had left the dig-spoon under a rock, and a moment later was excavating most industriously, while Marian turned her attention to the others.

They all joined hands and waded out a little farther than she had cared to go with Davie. It was splendid fun, but pretty soon Jennie

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called out, "Look, Marian! Davie is going up to the Cave!"

They all looked; sure enough the little fellow was almost up the hill. Delbert became excited immediately.

"I'll just bet he will go to monkeying with those potatoes!" he cried, and started forthwith for the beach. The same thought had crossed Marian's mind at the same instant, and, ordering the little girls to come too, she followed close at Delbert's heels.

They made all speed for the Cave, but they got there too late. Davie was just gulping down the last mouthful as they reached him.

He did his best to look sweetly innocent as he told them it was "goo-ood!" Delbert's face was a study. He was provoked enough to shake his little brother thoroughly, yet he was frightened enough to cry. Marian's face turned pale. Perhaps the things were perfectly harmless, perhaps even highly nutritious, but again perhaps they were deadly poison. She dared not risk it, and tried everything she could think of to force the small gourmand to disgorge his stolen — or shall we say misappropriated? — tidbit.

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It was no use. Davie would not drink a lot of warm salt water, and he would not let Marian run her fingers down his throat either.

She tried coaxing first, to no avail, and then she used force, but though they managed, by holding his nose, to get a few spoonfuls of the emergency emetic down his throat, and though Marian got her fingers well bitten, at the end of an hour or so the potatoes had not reappeared, and Marian, regarding the thoroughly enraged and squawling youngster, reflected that if any harm had been going to result from his impromptu lunch it would probably have begun to take effect before then, and so gave up the struggle.

Still she was not easy. She watched him closely all day. After he got over his fit of temper he went about his play just as usual.

Several times in the night the elder sister awoke with a start, and, leaning over him, held her breath till she heard the regular rising and falling of his. All the next day she watched, but everything seemed to be perfectly normal, and in the afternoon Delbert brought in another batch of the potatoes, which they did try on the burro. Davie watched with great interest. He

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said again that they were "goo-ood," but he did not offer to eat any himself. Marian thought that if her fight the day before had not accomplished the end she worked for, it had probably taught Davie to attend more strictly to his own business, which might be of great advantage some time in the future.

The burro also said the bulbs, or potatoes as Delbert called them, were good, and ate all Delbert would give him; so afterwards they tried them themselves. They found them somewhat like rather poor sweet potatoes, but they were a welcome change for their bill of fare, nevertheless. But they could not find them very often.

The baby burro was a great comfort to the children. Sometimes, when they were quite sure his mother was not near, they would let him out of the corral, and he would follow them about like a dog. They even made him drag home little bundles of wood for them sometimes. The other burros were quite tame, but not enough so to be handled at will.

Often the children had glimpses of the deer and sometimes of the pigs. Marian had been afraid at first that these latter might be the wild

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peccaries and more or less dangerous, but, after seeing them quite close one time, she concluded that they were not, for they certainly looked like the domesticated pig except that they were not at all fat.

Always they kept watch of the sea, never forgetting that each day might bring rescue, but, though many and many a sail passed by in the distant Gulf, never a one turned into San Moros. Sometimes, indeed, Indian canoes had been seen inside the narrow sandbars that divided San Moros from the Gulf, hunting turtles maybe, but they did not come within signaling distance of Smugglers'.

Marian's white skirt was flapping itself to tatters. Sometimes a heavy wind and rain tore it down altogether, and they would find it beaten into the sand, but it was always rescued, washed, dried, and sent aloft again.

The rainy days were the dreariest. Then there was nothing to do but curl up at the Cave. The brush shade they had built in front did not avail to keep out the rain. Before the rainy season was over they got so sick and tired of huddling in the Cave every time it rained that

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they would reduce their clothing to a minimum and go on with their occupations as if nothing were happening. If you really don't mind getting wet, there is a fascination in becoming a part of the gray, drizzling landscape. But they preferred the sunshine.

One day, as Jennie tossed down an armload of wood beside the fire down by the beach, something about her suddenly arrested Marian's attention. She looked startled.

"Jennie," she said, "come here."

Jennie came wondering, while Marian, dish-towel in hand, stood motionless, gazing at her.

"What is it?" asked the sweet-faced little girl.

Her sister did not speak for a moment longer, then, "Lift up your skirt," she said. Jennie obeyed, revealing her little bare legs.

Esther, drawing near, lifted her skirt also. Marian put down her dish and towel and knelt in front of the two for a closer inspection.

"Jennie," she said finally, "Jennie, you are actually getting fat."

"Is she?" questioned Esther. "She is n't as fat as I."

Marian took off Jennie's jacket and inspected

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her arms. Delbert drew near, and Davie came up to pass his expert opinion on the subject. "You are getting fat," repeated Marian.

And it was so. The little face was rosy, the cheeks were not hollow now, and the chin was not so pointed as it used to be. The little legs, though not so plump as those of Esther's showing, were really and truly rounded out.

"Well," said Delbert, "she has n't been sick, you know, not since we have been here, and we have been here 'most a year."

"No," said Marian, "she has not been sick. She has not even complained of feeling badly, as far as I can remember. Do you ever feel bad any more, Jennie?"

Jennie soberly examined her sensations for a moment.

"I feel hungry," she said.

Marian laughed, — a long ringing peal; but there were tears in her eyes too as she went back to her task. It was stewed "duck" that morning, one that Delbert had shot with his bow and arrow and then swam out and got. It was stewed duck and watermelon, — all they could eat of the latter, — and after breakfast they armed

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themselves with the longest poles they could get and went up into the pasture after the fruit of the *pitalla* cactus.

This was the cactus whose dried bark they burned on their spearing expeditions. The fruit grows high up and must be poked off with a long stick and then have its many spines carefully removed before it can be eaten. Fortunately, when it is ripe the spines come off easily and the center is cool, sweet, and nutritious. They were very plentiful, and sometimes they stewed them down in the little granite kettle, stirring them constantly. This made a thick, syrupy jam that the children were very fond of indeed.

Marian filled her two-quart glass jar and set it away till times when there should be none of the fresh fruit to be had.

Conning their prospects over and over, Marian often pondered on the chance held out by the mainland. With the aid of the log they could easily reach it. It was not nearly so far across the harbor as it was down to the egg islands. They could manage the raft so well now, and they could all swim so well, that she was not afraid of going anywhere when the water was smooth.

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And the mainland was just across the quiet little harbor. Suppose they crossed over, what was the chance of making their way to some ranch or settlement? Delbert could not remember just what it was that Clarence had said about it, but it was something about there not being a house for fifty miles, or was it a hundred? — he was not sure.

A wild tangle of thorny woods, no road or path, no compass to guide them! Perhaps a lagoon of water, perhaps not; perhaps plenty of *pitallas*, perhaps not! Marian always shook her head at the end. Here on the Island she was sure of food, here was safety and shelter, but out there — How long would it be before Davie would tire out and she would have to carry him? And then their path to be cut through how many miles of thorny brush? And no certainty then that they were not traveling in the wrong direction.

No! And still it drew her, that mainland.

Perhaps if they could climb to the top of those hills they could look out over the land beyond, and perhaps some sign of a ranch might be seen in the far distance.

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Many a time she had felt humbly grateful to Clarence for the things he had taught them, odds and ends of stray knowledge that had come in their need to be like precious jewels,—how to get oysters and clams, how to sail a boat, how to paddle, and many other things. Now she felt a little provoked that he had not taught them more.

Why in the wide world could n't he have told Delbert where the nearest habitation was, and what it was?—for it was quite likely that he knew. How had he got his information? she wondered.

When she suggested to Delbert that they cross over the harbor and climb that highest mountain and see what they could see, he was very willing; he had thought of it himself.

So they started out one morning, taking water with them, but depending on the *pitallas* they would find for food. They crossed over easily enough and did not have much trouble in reaching the foot of the mountain. But the ascent was not an easy matter. There was cactus of every description, all interwoven with thorny brush,—such a thick, matted under-

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brush that the children were scratched and pricked all over.

Davie was crying lustily before long, and Jennie fell and, in her efforts to catch herself, rolled a stone on Esther's foot that showed black and blue for many a day afterwards. Sometimes there would be a space comparatively clear where they could pick their way without encountering thorns at every step, and it was in one of these that Marian saw that which turned her back and kept her feet from the mainland for a year to come.

They had just come up a particularly steep part of the mountain, where an outcropping ledge added to the difficulties for little climbing feet. Above it was space to breathe before one had to cope with the next ledge above, which rose in an abrupt cliff. There was a *pitalla* tree there with a dozen fruit on it, all opened out red and inviting, and Delbert started with the long pole to bring them down.

Marian paused to get a thorn out of Esther's thumb and two from her next-to-the-littlest toe, and when that was finished the little girl ran on to help the others gather the fruit, and the older

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one, rising, put the needle carefully into a little case she had and slipped it into her pocket. Her supply of needles was limited and she must not lose a single one.



THERE WAS A CAT-TRACK

Then, as she turned to join the others, her eye fell to the ground at her feet, and there, plain and distinct, was a cat-track so large that she

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could not have covered it with one of her hands, and her hands were not so very small either. Fascinated, she stared at it. There was no doubt as to what it was. She glanced around, but could see no others. The ground chanced to be a little soft in that particular spot. But surely that one was enough; there was no need of more. What a monster it must have been to have made that track! Marian drew in a quick breath and then threw up her head and called casually, "O children, come back now. We won't go any farther."

Delbert, his eyes wide with surprise, came quickly with some protesting words, but Marian frowned warningly at him and with a tilt of her chin indicated the track. His gaze found it instantly. Indeed, it seemed to Marian to be the most conspicuous feature of the landscape.

He bent his head toward it a moment; then his eyes met hers again. For a second they looked at each other; there was no need of words. He turned back to the *pitalla* to hurry the others back, and Marian saw him casting surreptitious glances at the cliff above them.

The little girls and Davie were so glad to turn

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back that they asked no questions, taking it for granted that the plan was changed because there were too many thorns.

The two older ones were rather silent on the way back. They went as quickly as they could, but it was not a thing that could be done so very quickly, and Marian grew more and more nervous. Supposing the creature saw them, supposing — she jerked herself up and mentally gave herself a good scolding, but never was she so glad as when they left the mountain behind and pushed through to where the raft was tied, waiting for them.

As they pushed out and paddled back, calmness came to her. There were hard things in her pathway, dreary things to face, but, compared with what might be, her life seemed full of rosebuds and sunshine.

Four pair of bright, loving eyes looked at her; four healthy, warm, breathing little bodies would lie within reach of her touch that night. Suppose one were ever missing through her fault or carelessness, what pleasure would life hold then?

Looking back at the face of the mountain, she

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judged that they had climbed about a third of the way up.

It was well into the afternoon when they got home, and a hungry lot they were, too.

That night Delbert waited till he was sure the little ones were asleep and then he cautiously spoke Marian's name.

She was awake. "What is it?"

He turned over and raised himself on his elbow.

"Do you — do you suppose — it could swim over?"

"I don't think so," said she; "it is probably strong enough, but it seems to me I have read that they never go into the water unless they are compelled to. No, I am quite sure it would never do that."

Delbert drew a long breath of relief.

"I know the house kitty never wanted to get her toes wet," he said.

"No, we are quite safe from it here."

"I guess we'd better stay here," he said.

They did stay there. When the weather turned cold again, they were in better condition than they had been the year before. They had two rabbit-skin blankets, or robes, that kept out

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the chill winds at night, and they had the brush shelter in front of the Cave so thick and matted and interwoven with banana leaves and strips of stalk that the wind did not penetrate that either; so with the bright fire they could be comfortable through the evenings and cold nights. In the daytime they were always so active that the cold did not much trouble them. Besides, it soon warmed up after the sun rose.

One day, while up in the pasture hunting food and fuel, they noticed an unusually large mescal or century-plant. These were very common on the island, and Marian had never thought of any use they could put them to, but that day it suddenly dawned upon her that very similar plants were cultivated in some places for the rope fiber in the great sharp-pointed leaves. Perhaps it would be stronger and better than banana fiber. So they dug this one up by the roots and dragged it home.

They chopped off the thick leaves and tossed the stump to one side. Then, with some stones, the hatchet, and the knives, they thumped and pounded and smashed the leaves and worked and scraped away till they got the fiber out, and

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when they finally did get it, it seemed to Marian that it really was better than banana fiber. That evening they would see what kind of a rope could be made out of the new material. So after supper they got at it, sitting before their fire at the Cave.

They did not braid their ropes any more; they had learned better than that; but they both felt that their method of rope-making could be vastly improved upon, for it was a very slow process at best, and the rope finally produced was a very uneven thing.

But ropes they had to have. The raft must always be well lashed together, and ropes so used soon wore out. Their fences were tied with ropes in many places. They never went on any excursion without taking some ropes along, for they were constantly wanting them, chiefly, perhaps, to tie about their bundles of wood. A very large bundle of heavy sticks could be quite easily dragged home with a rope.

In the first place they had had only Delbert's hair rope and had used it for everything, but now they were trying to be as saving of it as possible, never using it when another one would

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suffice, but Delbert always carried it with him, coiled up and tied at his waist.

When they finished working out the fiber it was clean, straight, and pretty as it lay in a neat pile.

"Now, how is the best way to do this?" asked Marian in a businesslike tone.

"I have been thinking," said Delbert. "Remember that time I went with Clarence and his father after a load of corn? Well, at one place where we stopped there was an old Indian making ropes. I've been trying for a long time to remember how he did it. Dear me!" he exclaimed in disgust, "why did n't I pay 'tention? Clarence explained it all to me, but I just let it go into one ear and out the other. I was n't interested in making ropes then."

"Can't you remember anything about it at all?" asked his sister sympathetically. "If you could just remember a point or two, we could work it out from that, maybe. Davie, don't you want to put a stick of wood on the fire? Not that one, dear; that one won't burn," for Davie had picked up the stump of the mescal plant and heaved it into the center of the flames.

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"Yes, will burn," asserted he complacently, and returned to his play of fitting little clamshells together and laying them in a row.

Jennie poked the stump to one side and raked the coals and hot ashes over it. "We'll dry it out, and then maybe it'll burn, Davie dear," she said.

"Here," said Esther, gingerly handing over a piece of particularly thorny *pitalla*; "this will make a light."

"Why, you see," said Delbert, "they had the fiber — *este* they call it — all in a pile, but tangled as if they must have tangled it themselves. They had that part of it all done when we got there, but I remember Clarence said they laid it on something — a board, I guess — and hooked one end over a nail to hold it, and scraped it with an old machete blade fixed in a crooked stick, — scraped it and scraped it till there was n't anything left of the leaf but the fiber; then, I s'pose, they tangled it all up next; anyway, the man had a thing he whirled and he backed off across the yard, a-whirling it and whirling it and spinning a strand of rope out from that pile of *este*."

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"Was it a wheel he whirled?"

"No, it was n't. It was just a little stick thing he held in one hand, — two sticks, one of them whirled on the other."

"Give me your knife," said Marian, "and, Jennie, hand me that piece of driftwood there by you; no, the other one. Was the stick he had as long as that, Delbert?"

"Just about, but it was nice and smooth."

"This will be nice and smooth when I get through with it. You just tangle some of that fiber the way the old Indian had his."

Delbert began picking it apart and dropping it careless and crisscross.

"You can just bet," he burst out, "you can just bet your *boots*, if I ever have a chance to see anybody else doing anything again, I'll *see* what they are doing; don't care what it is."

"That is the best way," admitted Marian. "There are a whole lot of things, simple things, that would help us a great deal if we only knew how to do them. Can't you remember anything more Clarence said about this?"

Delbert wrinkled his brows. "There was

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something about a balance-wheel. What is a balance-wheel?"

"I don't know that I can explain it, though I know what it is myself. Maybe I can show you pretty soon. Hand me that little smooth stick about a foot and a half long, that one with the knob on the end. Yes, I think that will do nicely."

She had shaved and whittled the piece of driftwood till it was about a foot long, an inch thick, and two and one half inches wide at one end and tapering to a point at the other, which point she whittled into a button-like knob. Just back of the knob she made a hole big enough to slip the second stick into. It slipped down, but was prevented from slipping clear off by the knob on the end of it. Then, grasping this second stick, she began to whirl it so that the driftwood stick whirled round and round on it.

"There!" she cried; "does that look anything like it, Delbert?"

"It does! it does! That's it exactly! How did you guess?"

"I did n't guess. I have seen one myself somewhere, but did n't know what it was for.

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I think I saw a couple of them down at Doña Luisa's one morning when I went down for milk. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Let's see how this complicated machine will work."

She twisted a little of the tangled fiber round the knob on the driftwood stick and began to twirl. Of course it promptly twisted the fiber into a little strand.

"Here, Delbert," she said, "you whirl this while I spin out the strand, or else it will all twist up in bunches." Sitting down by the little pile of fibers, she grasped the twisting strand in one hand so that it should spin out of an even size. "Now, whirl away," she said, "and back off as fast as it spins out."

"This is just the way they did it," said Delbert. "I remember now, there were two of them; one whirled the stick, and the other sat down and pulled the strand out of the pile of fiber just as you are doing it." And he backed off, whirling vigorously, until the little pile of tangled fibers was all used up.

"There," she said, "that is a lot better than twisting it just with our fingers, as we have been

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doing with the banana fiber, and it certainly beats braiding all hollow. We can twist and twist and twist, and then we can put as many strands as we want to into the rope."

They worked that night till they had used up all their fiber, and then went to bed, agreeing to go next day and gather more mescal plants.

In the morning, when Marian raked open her fire, she raked out the stump of the mescal plant. It was brown and juicy. She began to examine it.

"Looks good. Does n't it?" she said to the children, who were rolling out of the Cave.

Esther came suddenly forward and bent over it. "It is good, too," she declared. "That is the stuff they had down at Julianita's one day. They were eating it, and said for Jennie and me to eat some too, but Jennie would n't touch it 'cause she was 'fraid it would make us drunk."

"You did n't eat any either," remonstrated Jennie.

"I did n't 'cause you did n't."

Marian was cutting the stump in pieces. They all tried it. It was sweet and good, though there was a great deal of string and fiber to be dis-

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carded after the sweetness and goodness had been chewed out and swallowed.

"But it *is* what they make mescal of; is n't it?" asked Delbert.

"I presume it is; in fact, it must be, only this wild plant does n't grow just the same as the tame ones, maybe; but it must be that they cook the centers something like this and mash them and let them ferment and distill it some way. It seems to me I have heard how it was done, but I was like you about the ropes; I did n't pay enough attention to remember. It certainly never occurred to me that there was anything about it that was any good to *us*. I think we owe Davie a vote of thanks."

"Clarence ought to have told us," said Esther reproachfully.

So another food was added to their list, and after a little practice they could turn out mescal fiber ropes that were so smooth and well twisted that they could be used to lasso with.

The two little girls had learned to lasso burros, but Marian's aim was not much better than Davie's. She did not practice the art as her little sisters did. She whittled out a big crochet-hook,

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though, and then twisted a very fine strand of fiber and crocheted a bag of it that was very useful to put things into on their travels. Whenever there was a storm, they would always go to Bonanza Cove afterwards to collect the riches found there.

These consisted mostly of driftwood, and the small pieces could go into the bag, while the big ones were tied together and carried or dragged home. But sometimes other things came, bottles empty but corked, — so many of them that Marian concluded all sailors must be sad drinkers, — bits of board, an old leaky bucket, and, best of all, this second year, a broken oar.

“I hope it did n’t incommode any one much when it broke,” Marian said, “but we certainly can make good use of it.” It was just barely long enough to use as a paddle.

When it came nesting-time again, they were right on hand at the bird islands. They would put the eggs into the bag and the demijohn and a few young squabs into the barrel, and they were so much better equipped for the cruise than they were the first time they made the

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trip that it did not seem such a big undertaking, and they could go oftener.

Once, while out on one of the sandbars, hunting clams, they saw something farther out still, something dark on the water. Delbert thought it was probably only a mass of seaweed, but he wanted to go and see. So, as the water was very smooth that morning, they paddled the raft out, though they had never been so near the Gulf before since their arrival.

They found the dark spot to be another log, much smaller and somewhat shorter than the one in their raft, but they took it in tow just the same.

They found some turtle-eggs on those sunny sandbars that second summer. Sometimes they saw the turtles themselves, but they were never able to catch one, though Delbert was very enthusiastic in the pursuit.

That summer they had vegetables; and how good they were! The turnips and carrots grew splendidly, and the children devoured them both cooked and raw. The green peppers, for some reason, did not flourish so well till the next year, but they were eaten with a relish also. The let-

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tuce, when transplanted and cared for, set in solid heads that reminded them of cabbage, and the children ate it like so many hungry little calves eating clover, and Marian often boiled a head of it with a fowl, and they voted it fine.

The bananas bore good fruit now, large, well-filled-out bunches. Marian dried some. Among the edible fruits of the Island was the wild tomato. They found very few of these, and the fruit was very small, scarcely larger than the tip of Marian's little finger, but when the seeds were planted in their garden they came up and did well, plenty of water increasing the size and quality of the fruit somewhat. The plants bore abundantly, and the flavor was good. They put them in soups or stewed them by themselves sometimes, sweetening them with the juice boiled from the *pitallas*, or, at rare intervals, with wild honey. But the greater portion of them were eaten raw.

There was certainly no lack of food now. Delbert did not set traps any more. He could shoot so well with his bow and arrow that he did not need traps to secure a rabbit when one was

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wanted, and the little girls could sometimes hit a hopping mark as well as he.

They lost the hook one day, some big fish making off with it, and they caught their fish entirely with the spear after that.

They were milking two burros. Jacky, being thoroughly weaned, was turned out of the corral and went where he pleased, and he generally pleased to go with the children whenever they were going where he could follow. Jennie was really plump now, strong and healthy, but not so strong or so healthy as Esther, who, solid little urchin, could follow Delbert very closely in all his exploits. She could run as far without getting tired, she could shoot an arrow with almost as accurate an aim, and she did not always miss the fish she aimed her spear at.

She was a splendid little swimmer, better even than Marian, and it used to seem to Marian that she was the prettiest little mermaid any one ever set eyes on.

CHAPTER VII

THE MUGGYWAH

THE time came when Marian had to face the problem of clothing. Every bathing-suit was worn to rags, and everything else was so near it that there was no trusting anything. When the weather was cold they had their wraps, and these covered a multitude of tattered sins, and none of the tribe save Marian herself ever wore anything into the water any more, but even with such economy there was no dodging the issue any longer. Unless she were willing that her flock should revert to extreme savagery in costumes, something had to be done.

Her first attempt was to crochet clothing out of fiber, but it took so long to make a garment that way that she was always eagerly on the alert for other modes. She remembered that soaking skins in wet ashes would remove the hair. Old Mr. Faston had said so once. So she tried it with some rabbit-skins. It worked very well. After being packed in a little hollow of the

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rock with ashes and water all night, the fur was easily pulled off. Then, when the ashes were washed off and the skin was nearly dry, it could be rubbed and worked till it was soft and pliable and Marian could begin dress-making.

Rabbits were getting scarce in their immediate vicinity, however, and the search for better hunting-grounds took them back to the mainland again. They did not cross the harbor and go to climbing mountains this time, however. They took the raft down the bay and followed one of the winding *esteros* that led between mango bushes, off and off, farther and farther, twisting and turning and growing narrower and more and more shallow till they came out into a comparatively level country, with no hills near at hand, but great stretches of mud flats and sandbanks and miles and miles of *pitalla* and scrubby brush.

They took the raft as far as they could and tied it to some bushes and proceeded afoot. They wandered several miles, taking care not to lose their bearings. They found wagon-loads of fine *pitalla* and some other wood, rabbits galore, and

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a few stone or flint arrowheads, but no sign whatever of human habitation.

Delbert shot eight big jack rabbits, Esther got three, and Jennie two, thirteen in all. They decided that the unluckiness of the number was for the rabbits, not for them. They took only the skins home with them, for they did not need the meat, and they had plenty of other things to carry back to the raft.

They loaded it with all the good dry *pitalla* they could pile up and tie on. Down close by the water, half buried in the salty mud, Delbert found a stone hatchet. Once before he had found a broken one, but this was perfect. He held it in his hand with a dreamy look on his face. "How long ago do you s'pose it was, Marian, when they made 'em and used 'em like this one?"

"Mercy! I have no idea; hundreds of years at the least and like as not a million."

"Well, anyway, it's mine now," he said decidedly, as he dropped it into the fiber bag.

"Yes, I think you can keep it with a clear conscience. Now, get on here, all of you. Never mind that crab, Davie; you don't need it, anyway."

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They did not get home till the moon was well up.

There was probably stuff growing at her hand that would have given those skins a good tan, if Marian had only known what it was and how to use it, but she did not. The soaking in ashes did fairly well; only if the skin got well wet afterwards, it would dry stiff unless it was worked and kept pliable while drying. Of course there was no strength in the rabbit-skins. They tore easily, but they were, nevertheless, a material of which Marian could make simple clothes, so that they should not be entirely naked if any one ever did come along. She made dresses for the little girls first, the simplest style she could think of, eliminating sleeves altogether and not continuing the skirts below the knees.

She crocheted belts of fiber, and used it also to sew with, for her supply of thread was very low indeed. There was no need of buttons; the little girls just slipped the dresses over their heads, slipped their arms through the generous armholes, belted the slight fullness at the waist, and there you were — pretty as pictures, too.

The only foreign articles in the construction

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of those robes were the belt-buckles, which Marian had contrived out of the fasteners of their old stocking-supporters. Of course the elastic and the stockings had worn out long ago. Every one was barefoot now except Marian, who was near enough to it, but the soles of her shoes had been very thick and good, and though the tops were worn out she still managed to use the bottoms as sandals and thus had some protection to her feet, which somehow she could never get toughened as the children's were.

After several more trips up the *estero* and more or less success in hunting, they had enough rabbit-skins to make Marian a dress too. She made it just as she had the other two, belting it with her red leather belt, which she had worn for several years, but which was still as strong as new. Her dress came a little below her knees.

The rabbit-skins were not at all satisfactory for Delbert. He was in and out of the water so constantly, and climbed and scrambled over the rocks so much, that a garment that must not be wet and that would not stand strain was not at all what he needed.

He told Marian that all he wanted was a loin-

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cloth such as other Indians wore, but Marian was not at all sure how loin-cloths were made or worn. She thought about cutting off an end of one of the blankets, but rather hated to do that; so she worked away with her hook and the banana fiber till she had evolved what satisfied him. And when he donned it and strode along, shirtless and barelegged, his hair stringing over his shoulders and kept out of his eyes by a red rag tied around his forehead, and the rag stuck full of feathers, he certainly looked not unlike an aborigine of some sort.

Davie declined even a loin-cloth; simple nature unadorned suited him to a T.

Thus, between the bananas and the rabbits, Marian managed to keep her family clothed.

They took many trips to the mainland. There were several *esteros* that led far inland, and they explored them all. They became accustomed to going without water. They always had *some* with them, but it was such a bother to take a lot of bottles along every time they stirred out from home that they trained themselves not to want a drink every little while. They would take a big drink before they left the Island in the morn-

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ing, and often no one would take another till noon. Also they learned to go without much food in the middle of the day and to eat that little raw.

Children are children the world over, I fancy. These had their little games and plays, which Marian was always ready to foster. The little girls and Davie used to put their dolls to bed every night, tucking them in as carefully as they did themselves. Also the dolls were usually carried with them, if they were making a trip of any great length, lest they should get lonesome and frightened if left too long alone. They traveled in a little fiber bag Jennie crocheted, and were generally hung up on the mast where they were well out of the way of the water, and if they went inland Jennie would wear the bag hung about her neck.

When they went in swimming, the children would play they were fishes and other water creatures and would imitate the different characteristics as well as they could. Davie's favorite characterization was that of the crab. He would run sideways on all fours and pinch the other children's toes. He played this so strenuously

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that he often made himself something of a nuisance and had to be tactfully guided into other channels of thought.

They were all perfectly delighted when Marian taught them how to stay under water as long as they pleased. On one of their inland trips they had found some large hollow weed-stalks. They played with them at first by simply blowing bubbles in the water and drawing up mouthfuls of water which they blew out at each other, but when Marian showed them that by holding one of the hollow tubes in the mouth one could stay under water as long as he remembered to breathe always through the mouth and to keep the top of the tube above the water, they invented all kinds of games that the new trick could be used in.

Delbert could do it best. He declared he could lie under the water and go to sleep, it was so easy. Marian did not advise him to try it. "You might get to snoring and drown before you could wake up," she told him.

Their novel clothing gave new impetus to their Indian play. There was some discussion at first as to which tribe they belonged to.

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They could not seem to recognize themselves as belonging to any they had yet heard of and they finally invented a new one and called themselves the tribe of the Hawks. Marian had been calling Delbert that for some time, he was always so keenly on the alert for anything to eat. And when he perched himself on a rock and fished patiently, — that was before they lost the hook, — he reminded her of nothing so much as a fish hawk ready to swoop.

They spent more and more time on the trips inland. They began to skirt the hills a little. Davie was so big now that he did not seem to tire out any quicker than Jennie, and the little feet were all so tough that hard roads did not daunt them.

They saw no more cat-tracks, but Marian never forgot that one, and because of it kept the tribe away from the high rocky hills and the thick growth.

The country beyond the largest *estero* became familiar to them for several miles. There was a certain lagoon there that they liked to go to in the rainy season, — and there was no lagoon

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there except in the rainy season. There were beautiful blue pond-lilies in it. Marian dug up some roots and planted them on the home Island.

They frequently found arrowheads and sometimes other stones, broken, but showing the work of human hands upon them, all of which spoke with certainty of bygone people, but never anything of modern times. Near the lagoon were several low hills, and on these they found the cotton-tree. This tree in its season produces big pods full of silky white cotton, and though the yield is not so very abundant, nor the quality so very fine, yet they saved every pod they could find, Delbert and Esther often climbing up for those that could not be reached from the ground with a pole.

"Some day I will invent a spinning-wheel and a loom," said Marian, "and we will make cloth." And the children, remembering the rope-making machine she had made, never doubted her ability.

Once, when they were about two miles from the end of the *estero*, they found a good-sized tree that had blown down some years before on

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the side of a little hill. It was larger than any tree growing there now and seemed to have been alone among its dwarfish neighbors. It was too heavy to be dragged all that distance, but if they could manage to chop off the few limbs and the roots that stuck up so high, they could roll it down to the *estero* and float it home.

It was a big task, but because they had plenty of time on their hands and no pressing social duties, and also because they needed that log in their business, they made trip after trip, starting at daylight and not getting home till nearly dark, chopped and chopped with the hatchet until they had the log smooth enough to roll, and then rolled it over and over all that distance and floated it home in triumph.

Then they set about improving the raft. The new log was a little crooked, but otherwise was about the equal of the one they had captured out in the bay. The three logs together would be much better than the raft as it was. Delbert's idea was to lash them together as they had been doing, but Marian had thought of an improvement, though it almost seemed as if it could not be done with their limited facili-

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ties. They had already accomplished so many tasks that seemed hard, however, and Delbert was such a bright and willing helper, and the little girls were always so willing to contribute



CHOPPED AND CHOPPED UNTIL THEY HAD THE LOG
SMOOTH ENOUGH TO ROLL

their share to any labor, that she told Delbert that at any rate they would have a try at ship-building.

Long and longingly she looked at the old canoe,

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but in the end left it where it was in the corral fence. She could think of no way to combine it with the logs to make a more serviceable craft.

The new log was rolled up on the beach beside the one they had found out on the water, and then the raft was taken to pieces, and the log in the middle of it was also rolled up on the beach. After they were all fixed in just the right position, they were kept in place by stakes driven into the ground.

The next thing was to make a new tool. Among the scraps of iron found on the little egg island was one about an inch in diameter and nearly three feet long when straightened out. It was round, an immense bolt maybe, but rusted and bent and twisted. What Marian did first was to heat it to straighten it out.

It was very hard to handle it when it was hot. She had an assortment of green sticks and matted-fiber holders for this purpose. As when they were making the fish-spear, they used a flat rock for an anvil and the hatchet for a hammer, and after many heatings and hammerings they got the iron straight with a blunt point on one end.

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But straightening the bar was only the beginning of the work. She kept the fire hot and heated the bar time after time, and burned three holes entirely through the two outside logs and corresponding ones well into the middle log. Then they took six of the toughest stakes they could find, whittled them straight and smooth to the right size, and drove them in through the burned holes like huge nails. Next they burned and whittled a big hole down into the center log as a socket for the mast. Then they picked out the best of the poles that had been in the raft and set it in place and drove in wedges to hold it solid. This got rid of the clumsy lashings and proppings, besides giving them a straight instead of a crooked mast, and it was not difficult then to rig up a sail that could be easily raised and lowered, using, of course, one of the blankets for a sail as before.

The platform that they burned their *pitalla* on when spearing next demanded their attention. It was too clumsy and was always needing repairs. Once out on the salt reef they had found a dead sea turtle half buried in the sand. They had fished it out and fastened it with stakes

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where it would not be washed away, though every tide would cover it, and the elements combined with the scavengers of the sea to clean the shell for them. With rocks and the hatchet they broke away the under part of the shell, and the top part, about two and a half feet in diameter, curved and dished, would hold the *pitalla* nicely.

Two stout, widespread crotches were cut and driven tightly into burned holes at one end of the projecting middle log, so that they supported the inverted turtle-shell. It did not, however, rest firmly enough till Marian had wired it to the crotches by means of the bail from the old wooden bucket, which was passed through little holes burned in the shell.

Away off up in the pasture they had found a place where the soil partook of the nature of clay. They brought some from there, mixed it to the right consistency and spread a coating all over the inside of the turtle-shell. It dried without much cracking, and the fire would harden it. This was a vast improvement over the old platform, which, in spite of their best efforts had always been a trifle wobbly and evinced a ten-

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dency to spill the fuel off into the water at the slightest provocation.

Delbert thought they had their task about finished now, but Marian had a great deal more to do to it still. She wanted to build on the other end a platform of some sort, where they could put things and have them stay dry. By burning holes and driving in stakes and then weaving in with small, tough green sticks, she succeeded in making that end of the raft look not unlike a huge basket. Then by filling that same basket with dried seaweed and such material, which was bulky but light, she had a place where things could be carried out of reach of the waves and where a little girl could lie down if she was tired. Of course, the waves slopped up and soaked through the seaweed to some extent when the raft was in use, but when it was moored quietly to the beach the hot sun dried it out pretty well.

When the raft was finished, their third rainy season on the island was past. Marian was learning, and the others along with her, something of the eternal patience of the universe. So long as she was accomplishing her purpose, she did not count much on the time it took to do it.

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They all thought the new raft was such a beauty that it deserved a name. Marian suggested everything she could think of from "Fleet Wings" to "Annabel Lee," but they finally decided on Jennie's choice, which was "Muggywah." She said it was Indian and meant something very safe and strong that nobody could conquer. Where she got the name or the notion Marian could not imagine, and she herself could not tell, but the Muggywah became one of the family forthwith.

Out where the center log projected, at the turtle-shell end, Marian burned the name. "Oh, we are getting wonderfully aristocratic," she told the children. "It is not every family that can have their own private yacht."

They went on a big spearing expedition when the Muggywah was finished. The tide was just right, and the fish were plentiful. They got three enormous red snappers and a lot of smaller fry, and it was the most satisfactory trip they had ever made.

Marian sat Turk-fashion on the seaweed deck and steered with the broken oar, which had been spliced to make it better to handle, and Davie

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was in front of her, dry and warm. When he went to sleep, it was the easiest thing in the world to tie him safely, for some of the stakes of the basketwork had been left high for that especial purpose, and then he did not have to be watched.

Jennie took the spear first, and when, after a while, she grew tired and gave the spear to Esther, who had been teasing for it, she too crept back and crawled in with Davie under the shawls and lay on her back, watching the bright stars above and the mango bushes, weird and grotesque with the flare of the *pitalla* fire and the backward swirl of the smoke. When the game became an old story to Esther, she yielded the spear to Delbert, and, after replenishing the fire from the fuel in the barrel, she too curled down on the deck at Jennie's feet.

Delbert and Marian then took turns at steering and spearing, and only turned the Muggywah back toward the pier when the fuel was all gone.

Along with their feathers the children took up other modes of Indian decoration of their persons. They did not quite come to war paint,

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but they wore long strings of beads, principally of the *guaymuchel* seeds. These are flat black seeds that grow embedded in a thick sweetish pith enclosed in a pod which grows on a big tree. The pithy part is highly prized by the Indians for eating, and the Island Hawks gathered them for that, and saved the seeds, which, when soft, are easily strung.

Then there were the tiny many-colored clamshells that they found so plentiful on the beaches of the bird islands. They bored holes in these with Marian's big fat darning-needle and strung them into valuable wampum belts. There were other seeds and beans that they strung, but these were the staples.

One Christmas, Marian gave Jennie a string of bone beads. She had found a number of the bones of some big bird, long, smooth, and hollow, and she whittled them into little sections and strung them on a string of her own hair. That same year her gift to Esther was a headdress of pink feathers taken from a dead bird that Delbert had found washed up on the beach one morning. To Delbert she gave a gay feather-trimmed quiver for his arrows and two new

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arrow-points of bone, and to Davie a number of little toys whittled out of driftwood. The children had remembered their kindergarten lore that year, and each one made Marian a little basket. They were rather loose and ill-shapen, but they were the forerunners of better ones.

With the Muggywah their food problem was still further simplified. They had lived so long on the Island now that they knew the tides, when they would be high and when low, and always took these into consideration along with the wind. With their gay striped blanket for a sail and a paddle of some sort in the hands of each, with their trips planned to have the tide in their favor as much as possible, they could accomplish much more business than formerly. They could take a dishpanful of boiled-down sea-water out to the salt reef, put it into the rock-hollows there, where the sun finished the evaporation for them, and maybe gather up a dish of dry and quite passably clean salt to take back with them; go on to some other place and gather a lot of clams for dinner, or perhaps oysters; go back again to Smugglers', put up the salt and attend to the clams, and strike

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off across the bay toward some distant *estero*, which would lead back into good *pitalla* country, or perhaps to a *panal* which they had seen some days before and been too busy to gather in; and by night they would have accomplished several times as much as when they had crept over the water on the old log with only driftwood and poles for paddles, or else had had to stay on land because the water was a little rough. With the new firm mast which was in no danger of falling down, they could utilize a wind that had been much too strong for them to tamper with before, and with the children able to swim like little fishes, they could brave a possible capsize or tumble overboard. Of course Marian was not going to risk the great waves outside in the Gulf, and when the wind blew the water into breakers on the Island, white and thunderous, she kept her tribe busy in the pasture or the garden.

Some time during each day they took their bath and swim. If the water was too rough on the seaward side, they took it in the harbor, where it was quieter, but there were not so very many days when it was too rough. Marian

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would keep her eye on Davie if they were out very far, but she had little anxiety about the others. Sometimes they took the Muggywah out into deep water and anchored her with a stone, and had their swim from there.

They had had no storm yet equal to the one on the night of their arrival on the Island, but during the fall after the Muggywah was finished they had one which came nearer to it than any in the three years. It lasted two days and two nights and certainly gave them a miserable time. They turned the little burros out with their mothers to save feeding and milking, and they collected vegetables and bananas in the Cave, which they ate raw, not being able to have a fire to cook by. Indeed, their precious embers were all put out, so that they had to start anew with the fire-sticks when the storm was over.

They snuggled up in the Cave, not going out except when it seemed absolutely necessary, and Marian sang over all the songs she knew and which she had sung to them on rainy days a hundred times before, — or at least it seemed so to her, — and told over all the stories they called for and racked her brains for new ones.

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The Cave had never been a roomy chamber, and now it reminded Marian of a nest that is filled to overflowing with nestlings which are ready to fly. Neither of the little girls could stand up in it now, not even in the widest part, and Davie, fast growing up into a big, strong boy, had to be very careful.

The first day dragged, the second crawled, and in the afternoon Marian delivered herself of the emphatic remark, "We are not going to live in this Cave through another rainy season; we will build us a house!"

The children were all struck dumb for a second and then fired volleys of comments and questions.

"You see," said Marian when quiet reigned again, "this Cave was all right in the first place. You were all little then, and it was the best we could do, but now, — why, see! Delbert is stretching up nearly as tall as I am; Jennie and Esther take up as much room as all four of you did then; we spread out so we can't keep ourselves covered from the mosquitoes; and I am sick and tired of camping out forever; I want a home."

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"But, Marian," said Jennie, "don't you think some one will find us now before long?"

"I think," said Marian, "that there is no likelihood of any one but Indians coming into San Moros. There is nothing to bring any one else here, and, as you know, we have seen very few canoes in all the time we have been here. I don't understand it; it seems as if they would all know about there being bananas and good water here and be coming all the time, but evidently there are no settlements anywhere near, and the poor Indian is not going very far from home in his canoe. Clarence must have found out about the place from some old Indian who, I suppose, had happened to stumble on to it somehow, and, as far as I know, Clarence was the only white person who ever came here, but" — she paused and looked impressively at the children — "some day, when we can sail the Muggywah a great deal better than we do now, when Davie is big and strong enough so that I dare risk him out there on the Gulf waves, and when the rest of you are bigger and stronger than you are now, we'll stock the Muggywah up with provisions and we'll go back to the Port ourselves. I don't

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dare risk it overland and I shall not try it by water so long as there is any risk in it, but if no one comes for us before then, the time will come when you children will be so big that we can go in safety, and then we'll go."

"I'd be willing to take some risk," said Delbert moodily.

"I'm not," said Marian. "Four children mother left in my care when she went to Guaymas that time, four I shall return to her. Your lives are safe here. If I lost one of you in trying to get back, I should never be happy again."

"How well shall we have to swim?" asked Esther.

"Better than any of us do now," said Marian. "We must be able to swim so well that if the Muggywah should swamp or turn turtle out there, we could all get to shore if we had to. It is a good deal, but we can do it in time. Clarence could have done it, but it may take us several years yet. We don't dare go out of the bay yet, and we all get tired out if we have much hard paddling to do; but to go to the Port in the Muggywah would take several days. Unfortunately, she does n't go as swiftly as the launch did."

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"If Clarence was here, he'd make her go better than she does," said Delbert.

"I think he would," returned Marian; "but what we don't know about sailing her we must learn; and meantime, I am tired of living in this little hole in the rocks, and the next job on hand is to build a house. We can do it."

The first thing to do usually is to select a site. Esther thought a good place to put the new dwelling in would be down by the pier, where the smugglers had had their house. It would be close to the water and the garden. But that took them out of sight of the bay and the distant Gulf, and mosquitoes and gnats were apt to be plentiful there at night, and so it was not to be thought of. Jennie, too, still retained her fear of the water during storms, and the higher they could get the better it would suit her. One thing about the Cave which they meant to improve upon in their new habitation was the fact that their view was cut off by the big rock in front. To see what might be out on the water they had to go clear past it, out of the house, as one might say. Of course, it sheltered them from wind and rain to a great extent, but Marian

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wanted to be sheltered from the elements and still be able to see out on the water.

From the mound that had been the smugglers' house projected a crotched timber, and Marian suggested that they dig it out for their new dwelling, though she had not yet decided where to build nor what material to use.

They made some wooden rakes and shovels, — that is, they called them that, — and these did a little better for the work than the old dig-spoon and the little spade. As they dug and scraped, Marian told them of the ancient cities which lay buried for centuries and then were sometimes discovered and excavated and of the wonderful things found in them. The children were very much interested, and straightway they ceased to be Indians and became a band of eminent scientists who had discovered an ancient, oh, a very ancient, city. It was very interesting indeed, for, when you came to think of it, there was really no knowing what you might or might not find.

They finally got the timber out. It was shorter than Marian had hoped, but then the children wanted to go on and dig the whole mound over.

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They had found a few bits of broken pottery, which they seemed to think very wonderful, and they hoped for more riches.

So, as it seemed a pity to veto anything so exciting, Marian consented to go on with the work. It seemed almost strange that they did not find more things than they did. There were a number of other timbers unearthed, but all but one of them were too rotten to be of use. There was the half of a *metate* stone¹ which they made a great deal of use of afterwards, and a broken pitcher and more pieces of pottery, but none of it big enough to be of any use. There were some very small fragments of glass and quite a number of bricks; also a few rusty scraps of iron, one of which had been an oarlock and one a knife. The bricks were mixed in with a number of stones, all bearing the marks of fire, — a cooking-place of some sort evidently.

The children were most excited over the pitcher. It had a gay flower on one side of it, and they watched eagerly for other fragments. They found a few and fitted them together, but when all was done there was still a hole in it as

¹ A stone used for grinding Indian corn.

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big as Delbert's fist and a piece gone from the nose, but they took as much pride in that old fragment as if it had been really something valuable.

But to Marian the bricks appealed the most. She meant to have a real fireplace in the new house, and they would aid very much. The crotched timber, short though it was, would also come in very handy, and the ground they had dug over so industriously was in fine condition for a garden.

Every day they took their swimming-lesson. Now they began to practice on long swims. They would take the Muggywah out, and while Marian or Delbert paddled it along, or tended the sail if there was a breeze, the rest would swim by the side. As soon as one got tired, all he had to do was to climb in and take his turn with the paddle. Even Davie was learning a little about paddling, and Jennie and Esther, now eleven and nine years old, could manage very nicely.

Out on the blue water they made a pretty picture, — the Muggywah dancing along with her gay striped sail, Marian in a garment

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constructed of her old brown petticoat which reached to her knees but left neck and arms bare, Davie's old straw hat tied under her chin, her long braids falling to her waist as she steered with the oar; the four children, their slender bodies gleaming white in the water, splashing each other, laughing, calling, now and again climbing on the seaweed deck to rest a few minutes before plunging down again into the salty waves.


And when they had been out long enough, they would turn the Muggywah and run for Smugglers', pretending they were fleeing from their enemies, — smugglers escaping from the government revenue men maybe, or Indians returning from striking some decisive blow at their tribal foes.

Always there were the little burros to be tended, a little gardening to be done each day, fresh water to be carried up to the Cave, and wood to be gathered. Marian had learned that as long as she worked with them her tribe did very well, but it was not well to leave them at separate tasks. She still felt, too, the desire to have them within her reach, to know for a cer-

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tainty where each one was and that he or she was safe. So they fished together, gathered wood together, worked together in the garden.

Delbert sometimes went to the pasture alone when Marian was busy with something else, yet as a rule he took Esther with him even there. Jennie was more apt to stay with Marian, to help with the cooking, or maybe just to sit on the rocks gazing out over the sea. As for Davie, he stayed with Marian too. Delbert never wanted him along when he was after game, for the little fellow was sure to make some sort of a noise at the wrong time, which Delbert always found hard to forgive, while Esther, on the other hand, would follow at his heels like a well-trained dog, moving silently, stealthily, and her aim was nearly equal to his own.



CHAPTER VIII

THE BUILDING OF THE WICKIUP

DELBERT came laughing to his breakfast one morning. "I've found the ideal spot for a house," he said.

"Good for you!" said Marian, as she carefully raked out from the embers the red snapper which had been stuffed with green peppers, wrapped in green banana leaves, and buried in the hot coals and ashes overnight. "All right, tell us about it as we eat."

"It can't be told. It will have to be seen to be appreciated," he said.

"In that case we will go and see right after breakfast."

Which they did, and he led them to the highest, rockiest point of that end of the Island, facing the long, sandy point where the watermelons were and where one could see both the bay and the harbor.

"Now," said he, seating himself on a big boulder, "you observe the lovely view we have.

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Nowhere on the whole Island can you get a better one. With a little clearing there is a fair chance of a path down to the pier. We are not so very far from the Cave either. And then, too, you see, this nice high cliff would save our making more than three sides to the house, and those big rocks there would be handy to brace against."

"Where would be our floor?" asked Jennie. "It's all rocks here."

But Marian was looking. The cliff, as Delbert called it, would save making one side of the house, and several of the big rocks Jennie was so scornful of were in a direct line for working into the walls, while the others could be moved by means of crude levers that they could work. The floor could then be leveled by building up with rocks from the lower side. It would be impossible to dig holes to set posts in, but, if one were not too particular about having the house symmetrical, there were several fissures in the rocks where posts could be put, and braced solid with other stones packed in about them. The face of the big rock, or cliff, back of them was very irregular, and there were several good places to set roof-timbers in.

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The ground sloped rather steeply down to the sandy point and was covered with brush, but a path, as Delbert said, could be cleared down to the pier, and it would be a better one really than the one they were using, too. Also a little tossing of the rocks to one side would clear the way back to the Cave, where they could use the old path to the beach. The heavy task would be bringing all the material up the hill, but that would have to be done in any case; only, of course, if they built at the Cave, for instance, they would not have to carry things so far.

"Delbert," she said, "what we are going to need, and need badly, is lime."

"Lime? What for?"

"To mix with sand and fresh water to make mortar to pack around the roof-timbers, where we set them into the cliff there, and around the posts, where we put them into this crevice below. Good mortar would set and keep them solid."

"They dig lime out of the ground, don't they?"

"No; they dig a certain kind of rock out and burn it, and it turns into lime; and they burn shells, and that makes lime too."

"Shells? Well, we can get plenty of shells."

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“Yes, but I don’t know how to burn lime, — how long it takes or how it ought to look when it is right, — and I don’t know exactly how to work it afterwards either.”

“Can’t we experiment and find out? Burn just a few at first and see how they work?”

“I guess we’d better, for I don’t want this house falling down on us in a storm, and if I can get the frame of it absolutely solid, I’ll risk but what we can manage the rest of it all right.”

“What will you make the roof of?” asked Jennie.

“Thatch,” promptly responded Marian. “Don’t you remember all that tall thatch grass out beyond the lagoon? The Mexicans at the Port sometimes make their whole houses of it. And, Delbert, there is another big job ahead of us. We are going to need every pole that is in the corral fence; we must build a good brush fence to hold in the burros, so that we can have every stick and pole there, every piece of drift-wood. I guess we’d better clear that patch of brush beyond the garden. It will be nicer cleared away, and we can pile it all on to the fence.”

They gathered a lot of shells that day, and,

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after a few experiments in their cooking-fire, made a little pile of alternate shells and wood and started it burning. Marian thought the shells ought probably to burn slowly; her idea was to rake out a few every now and then and see how things were going. Her only safe way was to mix a little mortar and see if it set hard.

Between times they worked on the brush fence. They had not progressed very far before they wished they had got at it at least two years sooner, for in the midst of the tangled growth of bushes, choked and stunted but still struggling to keep alive, they found a goodly number of cotton plants.

These must have been, along with the palms and the bananas, a part of the smugglers' garden. There were three straggling rows, and most of the bushes had a few sickly-looking cotton bolls on them. They are never very large on that particular variety of plant, but none of these were larger than a small hen's egg; indeed, most of them more closely resembled marbles. But they contained actual cotton, and with care and some cultivation the plants would produce more and larger bolls. They gathered them — what

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few there were — and put them with the cotton-tree pods.

“As soon as the house is done, I shall have to see about a spinning-wheel and loom,” said Marian, “and oh! if we had only found them before!”

They cut out the brush systematically, clearing out, as thoroughly as they could, each bush as they came to it. Delbert and the little girls would take sticks and bend back the bushes, so that Marian could get at them to chop them off near the ground with the hatchet; then with ropes they would drag them to the corral and pile them on the fence. They were trying to make it very solid and compact, also a little larger than before.

In this way they managed to release every pole that had been in the fence, and they piled them at one side to await the time when they should be ready for them at the new house.

They were not so very successful with the lime. They burned a good many shells before they produced what was at all satisfactory.

They found that there were not enough shells near by, but off across the bay, at the mouth of

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one of the *esteros*, was a bank that had seemed to be composed almost entirely of shells; so they took the Muggywah and made several trips there, coming back loaded down with all the shells they could carry. These shells were very old and broken, but Marian thought they would probably make as good lime as fresh ones would. There were other places, too, where shells were more plentiful than near home, and they made trips after them.

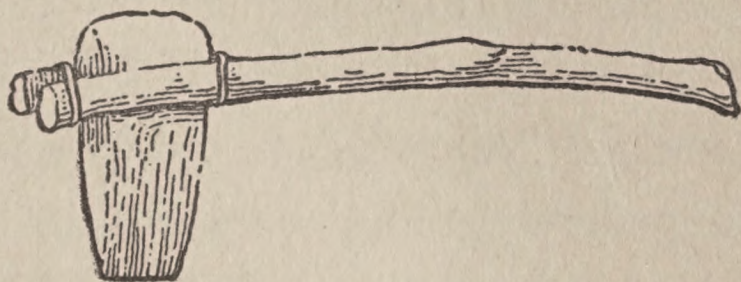
While they were gathering the shells they cut a good many *pitalla* poles, peeled the green bark off them, and left them to dry before taking them home. Delbert used his stone hatchet for that work; he had made a handle for it, as Marian said probably the first owner had, by splitting a stick down and tying it above and below where the hatchet was inserted, and while he could not, of course, chop wood with it, the soft green *pitalla* bark yielded to it very well. To be sure, it was no better, even for this purpose, than the other hatchet, but think how much more romantic it is to work with an ancient stone hatchet than with an ordinary little modern steel one!

Delbert thought so much of that hatchet that

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Marian said he had better give it a name, and told him about King Arthur's sword Excalibur; but when Delbert asked her if she thought that would be a good name for the hatchet, she said she thought they had better modify it a little and call it the "Exscalper" instead, because, though it might once have been used to scalp with, it was not in that business now.

These *pitalla* poles are hollow, but durable and comparatively straight, and are much used in building the humbler homes of western Mexico.



EXSCALPER

The poor little overworked hatchet had to be sharpened many, many times. There was no need now to put the whetstone beyond Davie's reach. He was too sensible to want to hide it, realizing as well as any of them that what the whole community needs should not be selfishly regarded as private property.

Delbert's jack-knife had been worked and

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overworked till it was about used up. One blade was broken, and the other leaned backward in a most heartrending fashion. He did not use it much, but always had the butcher-knife tucked into his belt beside the Exscalper.

The two case-knives had been sharpened, and the two little girls carried them. Davie never felt at home without the dig-spoon. With much use its edge had become as sharp as a knife, and he used it for that right along. And he, like all the others, except Marian, always had his bow and arrows slung at his back.

They did not take much time off the work till the season for "duck" eggs came again; then they dropped everything and sailed for the little white islands. It took only a part of a day to make the trip, and they could get eggs enough for several days. They almost lived on them through the season, and when it was over dropped back to their vegetarian diet, varied only by an occasional meal of fish from a night's spearing.

When, after much time and labor expended, and many, many experiments, Marian decided that there was enough lime to make the mortar

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to set the posts and roof-timbers, they began the task of getting their timbers up the hill.

They had thought that they could utilize Jackie for that, but he soon undeceived them. He was not averse to carrying small loads of wood, but when it came to pulling anything really heavy, Jackie called a halt, and, moreover, remained halted till the load was removed.

They found no means of coaxing or persuasion that availed in the least. It made not an iota of difference to Jackie whether those poles remained at the top or the bottom of the hill, and if the children wanted them at the top, why, let them take them there, that was all. In the end they had to drag them up themselves. They tied ropes to them and used main force. It was not a very long job when they once got over trying to make Jackie do it for them. As for him, he skipped along beside them, gay and carefree.

Then they debated long and earnestly as to just which crotched timber should be placed in this place and which pole in that. They tried each one in all the places to see where it would fit best, and everybody expressed his opinion. They planned where to put the doors and the

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window, and where was the best place for the fireplace.

When they had these momentous questions settled, Marian mixed her mortar. Each upright was made solid by being packed tightly with big rocks and all set in mortar; each roof-pole was set in the same way where it rested on the cliff. At the same time Marian tried not to be too prodigal with her mortar, for she wanted to have enough left to lay up the chimney, at least where it would come above the roof and be exposed to the wind and weather. And her supply of lime was not at all large, for it took so long to gather up the shells, and often they had not got them well burned after they were gathered.

After her timbers and poles were well set, she began on the fireplace. For this they brought up the bricks and the blackened stones from the smugglers' old house; for some kinds of stones will crack and split with heat, or even go so far as to pop into little pieces which fly in all directions, and Marian wanted that fireplace built of tested stones that would be up to no mischief. The stones she had cooked over at the Cave were brought, and two nice, smooth, large ones

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from the cooking-place at the beach. She used clay from the pasture as mortar for the fireplace and the lower part of the chimney.

Once, on a trip up an *estero* that wound past a little hill, they had noticed a big flat rock that Delbert thought would make a fine hearthstone. They could find other flat rocks, of course, but this one had especially appealed to the boy, because it was much larger and smoother than any other they had seen, and he thought it would be nice to have the hearth of one big stone. Marian thought so, too, but was afraid it was too big for them to manage. However, she finally consented to try it. If they could get it on board the Muggywah at all, they could find some way of getting it off again and up the hill and into place.

After all, thought Marian, if her flock learned to achieve things, to overcome difficulties, to persist in spite of obstacles, was that not of itself a fair education? And to bring that great rock home would certainly be a lesson in achievement.

So they went after it. They took plenty of ropes along and several round pieces of driftwood to serve as rollers under the stone. They found it readily. One side was so flat and smooth that

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it seemed as if it must some time have been worked upon by human hands; the other was rough and irregular, being much thicker at one end than at the other. It was all Marian and Delbert could do to lift it alone, and even with Jennie's and Esther's help it was none too easy. Fortunately it was not far from the water's edge. They got it on their two largest rollers, and, by smoothing the way and prying the rollers along, they got it down to the Muggywah.

Then it developed that it would be more easily got aboard at low than at high tide. At low tide the Muggywah could be placed under a bank and the big stone swung off on to her; at high tide it would have to be lifted up to get it aboard.

So they made their preparations. They tied the Muggywah fore and aft, and rigged up a tripod to assist in swinging the hearthstone over on to her just where they wanted it. They pushed and pried the rollers, and tugged and twisted till they had the big stone in position on the edge of the bank, and then retired to the shade of a scrubby mesquite to eat their lunch of turnips and carrots and drink Island water from the bottles, while they waited for the tide to go out.

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And when the lunch was finished, they sallied forth and hunted for *panales*, clams, oysters, and, incidentally, arrowheads and more hatchets.

When the Muggywah dropped below the bank, they rallied again to the task in hand. The tripod was a big help; they had the hair rope for that. Carefully they worked. It was not merely the getting of the big stone that Marian had in mind; she wanted to be quite sure no one was going to get hurt in the process.

“Delbert, don’t lift on that till you really strain yourself,” she said. “Davie, you stand by that pole and see that it does n’t lift up; I don’t want your little fingers mashed under this. Esther, poke that stick under there where Jennie’s fingers are. There, that’s right; that holds it instead. Now, Jennie, you stand there where Delbert is. Delbert, you and I will have to swing round below here now. Davie, hold that pole down tight.”

Davie held valiantly with all his might. There was no danger of that particular pole budging, but Marian wanted him out of the way, and knew that the only way to be sure he would not slip in at the wrong minute, and maybe get a

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finger jammed before she could help him, was to keep him busy elsewhere.

"There, now, you see, part of the weight comes on the tripod. Carefully now, Esther. Jennie can do that alone now; you jump down and be ready to help here."

In the midst of it all she began to laugh. "Delbert, if it takes all this fuss to get it aboard, how in the world are we ever going to get it off again? We may have to dump it into the harbor yet."

"Not much we don't," muttered Delbert between his teeth.

"Well, all steady now! Gently there, Jennie! That's right! Now jump down and help Esther. There, there she is, neat as a whistle. Look how it pushes the Muggywah down, but it's all right. Knock up that tripod pole there, Delbert. We'll have the rope off. Where did you put your oysters, Jennie? Oh, I see. Well, drop 'em in here; we must be starting back. It will take us all day to-morrow to get this hearthstone off the deck, and two more to get it up the hill, as like as not."

As a matter of fact, it took a great deal longer than that, but they did not work at it all the

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time. They rigged up another tripod to help them swing it off the Muggywah, and by aid of rollers got it to the foot of the hill safely. There they tied it to something to make sure it would not slip and roll down on them, and little by little, as they felt inclined, they pushed it up the hill. Sometimes a day or two would go by without its being touched, and then, some morning when they felt vigorous, they would get at it with levers and rollers and work it up the hill a little farther. Davie got quite expert in slipping the stones in back of it to block it up while they rested.

In the course of time it was taken into the frame of the new house and settled into place, being blocked with stones till it did not wiggle in the least; and as they stood back surveying it, they all felt that it was worth all the trouble it had been to get it. The fireplace itself was built up waist-high when the hearthstone was put in place.

Marian was planning a good handy place to cook over, and several of the scraps of iron were used with that idea. The old twisted, rusty oar-lock, for instance, was converted into a hook to

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hang the kettle on at one side, and there were various little places made, to put things on to keep hot or to go on slowly cooking. At the proper height a mantel-shelf was put in, too, a smooth piece of driftwood. It had once been a board about a foot wide by three or three and a half long, but it had been tossed and beaten till the edges were thin and ragged. Marian fitted it across and surveyed it with pride.

It seemed as if the longest and most tiresome part of the work was the building of the chimney. Massive was the word for it. It was continued up pretty high. Marian climbed up on the roof-timbers and had the children hand her the stones and mortar.

They got well tired of the job before it was finished. At the last, Marian herself would help gather a pile of stones, and then, after mixing the mortar, would climb up on the roof and work away, and Delbert would hand up the rocks one by one and the mortar in the little wooden pail. She used the dig-spoon and the little spade for trowels, assisted by a piece of old board she had whittled into shape.

Yet, after all, considering how tiresome it must

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have been, the children were pretty good about it. Delbert never complained of the monotony, and though the little girls were quite sure Marian was building that chimney higher and thicker than was at all necessary, they did their work cheerfully.

They stopped when their good lime gave out, but Marian was sure that she had it high enough to draw well at all times, and so big and solid that it would not blow over in a storm, even if it had not been protected to some extent by the high rock, or cliff, back of it.

She would have been glad of more lime, but it was such a task to gather and burn the shells that she decided to finish the house without it. They gathered up their *pitalla* poles now, clean, creamy-white poles, which they fastened in place by tightly lashing with small ropes. Where they needed them in the walls they packed the end that rested on the ground with rocks and mud and tied the upper ends. The house began to take shape rapidly. The *pitalla* poles were easily split when smaller, finer pieces were needed.

Finally they were ready for the thatch. It

would take a great many trips to get that. They knew of but one place where it grew, and that was away up by the lagoon. They would go and cut grass, or rather dig it out by the roots, till they had enough for a bundle for each one. These bundles were graduated in size, of course, but Marian allowed no shirking. Nobody really tried to shirk but Davie. He did n't like to carry thatch-grass down to the *estero*, and he tried all kinds of excuses to get out of it, but Marian was firm.

"Every little helps," she said. "It is work that you can do, and you must."

So, in spite of his grumblings and groanings, Davie carried his little bundle as well as the rest. They would make several trips, stacking the grass in a pile at the pier; then they would stop and carry it all to the top of the hill to the new house, and Marian and Delbert would put it on the roof. Jackie helped them there. He did not mind carrying quite a bundle of grass up the hill, for it was light and did not tax his strength. It was pulling that Jackie objected to.

They put the grass on very thick, tying each little bunch very firm and tight to the split

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pitalla prepared for it. Here again the little girls felt very sure that Marian was doing a much better job than was at all necessary. They were quite sure that much less grass would do just as well. But Marian, remembering the fury of that first storm on the Island, was not going to run any risks, and Delbert backed her up in her determination. So for weeks they worked at it, digging and tugging at the grass up by the lagoon, often cutting their fingers on the sharp edges, toiling down through the hot sun to the *estero* with their bundles, tying them on the Muggywah, and then paddling back home. Then, when Marian and Delbert climbed up on the roof, the little girls handed up bunch after bunch of the rank, heavy grass to the two above, who tied them with the stout little cords that they sometimes took a day off to make. And finally the whole roof was covered with a thick mat of the rustling grass, the long loose ends of each row hanging well down over the root ends of the row below. Several poles were fastened across to hold it down better and make it all the surer that the wind would not get in underneath and undo any of their labor.

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Then there were the sides to come next. Marian had thought that they would maybe thatch them too, but the children were tired of going after grass. Indeed, they had gathered all the best of it; what was left was so much shorter and thinner that it would take much more time to get it. So she cast about for other material nearer home.

There were several big rocks in a line with the walls, two of which were immovable, but there were several others that they succeeded in prying up and swinging round into place. In between them Marian built up a wall even with their tops, using for her mortar the shells that had not been well burned, mixing them with clay brought from the pasture. It was very tiresome bringing it, but it did nicely after they got it there, for it dried hard and smooth and would stay so as long as it was kept dry at least.

One thing Marian was particular about was to use only the fresh water for her mortar. It was more trouble than it would have been to use salt, but she had heard some of the men at the Port once talking about some one who had made a failure of a kiln of bricks because he had used

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salt water in the making. She did not remember what they had said was the reason why the salt was bad in that particular place, nor just what effect it had had, but she intended to run no risks; so her mortar was all mixed with water from the well on the pier side of the Island.

But she could not build up the entire wall that way, and by the time she had it up as high as the big rocks there were no more loose stones near them and she had used up every bit of her burnt shells. All hands were very tired, too, of lugging earth from the pasture, and they could find no clay nearer home.

She turned to the banana-patch then, and they tore the big stalks into strips of uniform size and used these to weave in basket-fashion between the uprights and the split *pitallas*. It did very well except that, as with everything else, Marian insisted upon its being done so well that it seemed to take forever to do it. They also used the dried leaves, weaving them in and out and pounding them down so as to have a good thick wall. Some kinds of brush they used, too, fine branches that had no thorns, or at least no large

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ones, but the fibrous strips of the banana stalks were the main material used.

This part of the task was something they could all work at. Even Davie learned quickly how to weave in brush and banana stalk and work and pound them down. Up under the eaves they were not quite so particular to have it thick and firm.

Finally it was all done. There remained now but the floor, the doors, and the windows.

The floor must be leveled and made as smooth as possible. It was so rocky and rough that it seemed the only way would be to build up from the lower side with stones. There were plenty of stones, but they had to be brought from some little distance now, as everything loose in the neighborhood had been pretty well cleaned up. Marian packed stones in as well as she could, and when it was comparatively level, filled in the chinks with pebbles and wads of banana leaves, and then they lugged up pailful after pailful of sand from the beach.

Jackie helped here too. They made a pair of sacks by folding a blanket over once and sewing up the ends. This could be thrown over Jackie's

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back. They put in as much sand as they thought he would stand, and then, when the rest of them had their loads ready, they would all go up the hill together. Some one had to watch pretty closely to see that the load did not slip off over Jackie's tail on the steep parts of the path, but he carried so much more than any of them cared to that it paid to use him. Of course, if they had really put much of a load on him, he would probably have balked as was his habit, but they were careful not to do that. Marian thought that he would gradually get used to carrying loads and be a great help to them some time in the future.

They poured the sand on the floor, where it ran down into the cracks and little holes, till after two or three days of pretty steady work the cracks seemed to be all filled up and their floor was level and smooth.

Then they went to Bonanza Cove, where in the storms the seaweed had been pounded and churned and tossed far up on the beach; there it had dried and bleached in the suns of later days till now it could be peeled up in great white layers. They took this dried seaweed in as big flakes as they could carry without breaking it,

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and carpeted every bit of the floor, clear up to the hearthstone. But Marian was a little afraid this was too near the fire for safety; so they hunted till they found enough big flat stones to lay a row all around the hearth. Then, by wetting the seaweed, they could pack this row down to a level with the hearthstone, and finally, after filling with sand all the little corners where the stones did not just match, they felt pretty certain that no sparks would fly out far enough to set their carpet on fire.

Then they moved in. It was not so tremendous a task. There was no packing or unpacking to do, no bickering with drivers of moving-vans. They simply gathered up their bedding and bags of feathers and dumped them down in one corner on the floor, and then brought over the few utensils from the Cave. A very few more trips brought over all the odds and ends that had accumulated, — pretty shells and other small treasures such as children always collect.

The new home was very irregular in shape, for their material had been far from regular or uniform and they had had to place their posts and poles where the unyielding rocks would receive

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them best, but the room averaged about eight feet by fifteen, the eaves being about six feet lower than the side built against the cliff.

There were two narrow doors and one window, and for the doors Marian made a light frame of split *pitalla* tied together at the corners and then wove a sort of mat of palm-leaf across them. This was too light and thin to be trusted in a storm; so of stouter material, split *pitalla*, but heavier pieces, she made a pair of large, heavy frames and covered these with thatch-grass, for which they made another trip to the lagoon. Even then it was not quite enough, and she finished with palm-leaves, the old dried ones that were not strong enough for ropes, but could be used whole. Some of these, too, she tied on the outside of the house where the wattling seemed to be a little thin; they would help a little when the rains came.

The light doors she fastened on permanently with fiber ropes, but the heavy storm doors were left outside, where they were out of the way ordinarily, but could be quickly put into place and tied over the others when a storm came up. She did not bother to make a mat frame for

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the window, but contented herself with the one heavy thatch one, which was fastened across the top so that it could be swung out and up and be propped with a stick, thus making a shade over the opening like an awning; it could also be swung down and tied tight whenever desired.

Inside there were several shelves put up by swinging them from the roof, and their largest piece of driftwood, laid across two rocks, made a very good table. These and the mantel-shelf were enough to hold all their dishes and other valuables. The bedding, folded up neatly in a corner, did not take up much room. The fireplace did not smoke, and it was very convenient indeed for the cooking.

At night the children lay down where they chose on the clean, springy seaweed floor, and pulled a part of a blanket or a rabbit-skin robe or the big cape over them and slept the sleep of the healthy till morning.

They had no lamp or lantern, but the bark of the *pitalla* burned with a white light that made the inside of the little house very cheery and cozy of an evening, and was a good enough light for anything they might want to do.

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They had begun the house at the end of one rainy season; they had it finished just as the next one was upon them. They went with the Muggywah and gathered up all the *pitalla* bark, now nicely dry, which had been stripped from their poles and which they had not already brought in, and stored it in the Cave to keep it dry, and when they had that full they piled another heap in another cave, where it would be partially protected from the wet.

They gathered, too, a big pile of driftwood near the house, — light stuff such as the waves were always tossing up, and as much heavy stuff as they could get for back-logs to bury at night, so as to have good embers in the mornings when it was cold, for a bed of hot embers was a comfort indeed to start in with.

The children had begun calling the new home a wigwam, but Marian said she was quite sure that a wigwam was always made of skins stretched over poles, but she believed — she was not quite *sure*, but she believed — that a wickiup was made of wattles with a thatch or dirt roof; so, of course, theirs was a wickiup.

Rainy days had no terrors for them now, and

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no dreariness. They would do what was needful to make the little burros comfortable, gather into the wickiup what food and fuel was needed for the next day and night, close the storm door, on the side the wind and rain were coming from and open the other to let in plenty of light.

A very small fire would keep the room comfortable, and they could sit warm and dry, and do whatever amused them best, — weave baskets, or make little ropes, or sharpen knives or the hatchet. Rainy days were good times to crochet fiber into bags or clothing and to bore holes in wampum. Delbert made himself a beautiful wampum belt. It was woven of fiber about two inches wide, and he covered it with little shells sewed on through two little holes bored in each one. It was a great deal of work, but he was very much interested in it, and showed such ability in boring holes without breaking the shells, and in sewing them on so that they made a pretty pattern, that Marian was as proud of him for doing it as he was proud of the belt when it was done.

It was that summer that Marian took up the

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long-neglected task of the children's education. She was handicapped certainly; her sole school-room equipments were half a lead-pencil, a piece of blue chalk half as big as her thumb, which chanced to be in her workbag, and a part of a newspaper that had lain in the bottom of their lunch-basket and had a dozen times only narrowly escaped being used up for something else. This paper consisted mainly of advertisements of real estate for sale, male and female help wanted, and a page of sporting news and market reports, with half a column of mineral discoveries. It was not an ideal primer, but it would do to teach Davie his letters from.

There was a place on the rock wall that was comparatively smooth, and Marian made it more so by rubbing it with flat stones small enough to be handled easily and as much like a grindstone in composition as she could find. She would rub and rub, throw on a little water, and rub again, and she kept that up till she had a space that would serve very well as a black-board. Of course the blue chalk did not last long, but then they used bits of charcoal, and if bones were burnt just right they made a very

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good substitute for chalk. A bunch of mescal or banana fiber made a very good eraser.

There were several pieces of driftwood smooth enough to do for slates, and one or two bits of flat stones also. Clamshells were useful. They had quite a number of these, as big as saucers, that they had used as dishes. Marian took them now and made school readers of them. With the lead-pencil she wrote lessons on them, Mother Goose verses, bits of poetry that did not have too many big words in them, remembered proverbs, and little stories. When the three older children could read and spell all the words in them, she washed them out and wrote another lesson.

Arithmetic was taught by means of the blackboard and little shells, stones, and seeds. Delbert always did his figuring on the hearthstone. He would stretch out on his stomach and elbows, his chin in his hands, and his feet kicking at all angles.

The other children had to give him a wide berth or they got all kinds of cracks. Jennie complained that she could not think lying down, so she always used the blackboard. Esther used it too, not because her brain would not work

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horizontally, but because when Delbert had the hearth there was no room for any one else there, and he made his figures as big as all out-of-doors anyway. After all, mental arithmetic was more satisfactory, and Marian drilled them pretty well in that.

The paper-tree proved a treasure to them. It is, I think, in some respects a distant cousin of the birch. At any rate, its bark can be peeled off in the same way, only it is much thinner — of paperlike thickness, or thinness rather — and partially transparent. When she could get good pieces of this, Marian never failed to acquire them, and she made books of it, clumsy, of course, but serving a little better than the clamshells.

She was constantly experimenting for ink, testing every juice she came across that seemed at all likely. Pens she could make, as her ancestors had before her, of big quills. Her little penknife had never been much used except to whittle out toys for Christmas, and it was just the thing to make quill pens with.

Fortunately, Delbert and the girls were eager to learn. They did not want to be behind their

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mates when they got back to them, and as they were all three pretty bright, Marian's task was much easier than it would otherwise have been.

But Davie was not over anxious to spend time on what seemed to him so useless. He was more backward than either of the others, too, and with him Marian had need of the most loving patience, also of ingenuity in thinking up ways to get him interested. Fortunately, she was patient, and, moreover, loved the little fellow so fervently that she would have developed patience even had she been naturally devoid of it.

CHAPTER IX

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT: AND WHAT CAME OF IT

DAVIE was really getting to be quite a chunk of a boy. He was different from Delbert, — more square and solid of build, of quieter and calmer temperament too, slower in his motions and also in his thought and speech. In features he resembled Esther more than any of the others.

He was a very straightforward little fellow. No matter how much he differed from the others, he never saw any reason for concealing his opinions or denying his actions. He did not talk much, but seemed to do his share of thinking, and when he reached a conclusion was apt to cling to it rather tenaciously. He usually yielded to Marian's authority with a pretty good grace, but as he grew older he was more and more apt to disregard the wishes of the others when they crossed his own. Jennie could, as a rule, manage him pretty well, for she was very diplomatic about it, and seemed to have a gift for knowing when to coax and pet him into doing what she

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wanted him to and when to twist him adroitly round her fingers in some other way.

Esther, too, though she was not so successful as Jennie, rarely clashed with her little brother, but Delbert, having perhaps less of the guile of the serpent in his make-up, often did clash in a small way. He thought that as he was older his wishes should have the preference as a matter of course. But Davie held other ideas. He did not propose to have Delbert bossing him just because he was bigger, and often he was stubborn just for the pleasure of plaguing his older brother. The trouble was never very deep-seated. Two minutes after an explosion of hot words on Delbert's part had called Marian's attention so that she could settle the matter, whatever it was, the little boy would be cuddled up beside the older one, sweet-tempered and smiling as you please.

Delbert never seemed to lay Davie's naughtiness up against him after the immediate occasion had passed. But one day there were after effects which neither of them had counted upon.

Davie had gone with Delbert and Esther up into the pasture to see how a certain *panal* was

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growing, Marian and Jennie being detained at the wickiup. The *panal* was still too small to be molested, so they went back, skirting the high, rocky part of the Island that lay overlooking the shallow part of the harbor. They went down to the water once and then climbed up again, and Delbert suggested that they go back to the level pasture and follow the path home as the quickest way of getting there. Davie, for no reason save that Delbert wanted to go back to the path, decided that he wanted to continue climbing over the rocks; he said he was looking for *panales*.

Delbert did not want to go on and leave him behind, for they were a long way from the wickiup, and Davie was little. But he coaxed to no avail and issued positive orders with as little result. Esther, too, tried her hand, but it was useless. Davie continued wending his way along the roughest, rockiest part, "looking for *panales*."

Delbert fretted and fumed, and presently they came to where Davie must come back to the level land or else crawl along where it was really dangerous for him to go.

Had it been Jennie, she would have looked the

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other way, started a conversation with Esther about something a long way off, and pretended to forget all about the little boy, and he, finding himself no longer in the lime-light, as it were, would have quietly come back and trailed along in the path behind her. But Delbert was pretty well worked up anyway, and he was truly alarmed for Davie's safety in that spot.

"Now, Davie, you will have to come back," he said.

"No, go along here," returned Davie with true Indian brevity.

"Why, you can't! Honest, Davie, it is n't safe. Marian would n't let you if she were here. Come on, now."

Davie hesitated a minute, debating whether he should attempt farther advance where he was or go back with the others. To jump across to the next rock was almost beyond his daring, but it would be having his own way. He made, or appeared to make, preparation for it.

A quick, hot wave of anger flashed over Delbert. He started forward, intending to catch his naughty little brother and carry him back along the path by force, at least till they were well past

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the rocky danger. He knew he could do it, once he got hold of him.

Davie knew it, too, and made all haste to jump before Delbert could get to him. Perhaps he could have made it, if he had done it with deliberation, but, as it was, he slipped, missed his mark, lost his balance, and, slipping, failed to regain it and fell.

Delbert and Esther never will forget the sickening horror of that moment. They rushed forward and scrambled down the rocks as best they could to where the little boy lay, making no effort to get up, but screaming at the top of his lungs.

Esther was crying, too, but Delbert managed to control himself enough to refrain from that, and, frightened as he was, horrified through and through, he could still reflect that though such a fall might easily have broken his neck, Davie's yells proved he was still very much alive.

When he reached his little brother and tried to pick him up he screamed louder than before, if possible, and then Delbert saw that one leg was bent in a way that proved even to his inexperience that the bone was broken. There was also a cut on the head that was bleeding badly. With

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white face and shaking fingers Delbert examined the head and was relieved to find that the skull did not seem to be broken, so he took off the rag that was tied about his own head to keep the



DAVIE'S FALL

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT

hair out of his eyes, and tied it about Davie's to stop the bleeding. There was only salt water to be had just there, and Delbert did not know enough to know whether that would do at all to put on or not, but he knew it would make the wounds smart badly, so he did not risk washing them with it.

Esther had already started off to carry the news to Marian. Delbert almost wished he had gone himself, as he would probably have reached the wickiup a few minutes sooner. Still, supposing Davie were hurt inside! Supposing he were to die before Marian got there!

If Delbert had been older and wiser, he would have known that only about half of Davie's yells were from the pain of his injuries, and the other half were from fright at the pain. As it was, not daring to move the little fellow a bit lest he hurt him more, he could only curl down beside him and, putting his arms around him, kiss him and talk as soothingly as he could.

One arm that lay under him Davie did not try to move, but he put the other about Delbert's neck and sobbed, "I — want — to go — back — to — to the — path, Dellie!"

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A week later Delbert sat down and laughed till his sides ached over the memory of that speech, but at the time it did not strike him as being at all funny.

As soon as she got back to the smooth ground, Esther ran like a little deer, ran and ran, stumbled and fell twice, and picked herself up and ran again till she was out of breath, and walked till she regained it, and ran again. She was all out of breath when she stumbled into the wickiup.

Marian was not there. She and Jennie had started down the new path for water, but in answer to Esther's wild calls they quickly returned. The tears had made streaks through the dirt that Esther got on her face when she fell, and she was sobbing so she could not talk straight.

"Oh, he would n't mind Dellie, Marian, he would n't mind Dellie, and he fell way down on the rocks, and he's all broken and bloody!"

It was not a very reassuring way to tell news certainly. Jennie began to cry, but though Marian's face went white, she remained calm.

"Esther, who fell?"

"Davie. He would n't mind Dellie —"

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT

"There, there! Listen, Esther! Esther, is he dead?"

"N — n — not yet," gasped Esther, "but he's all bleedy and Dellie says his leg is broke, and he is crying awfully."

Marian drew a long breath; then, "Jennie, stop crying, so you can help me," she said. "Esther, sit down there and get your breath. Where is Davie? Where did he fall?"

"Down by Little Pig Cove. He would n't go in the path, and he tried to jump and he fell, and Dellie stayed with him."

Marian pressed her hands tightly to her temples for a moment, and in that moment thought of all that she could do.

"Esther," she said, "fold that blanket to take back with us. Did Delbert have his good lariat with him? Yes? Then see if you can find another stick like this out in the pile. Jennie, hold this jar so I can pour what water is in the demi-john into it. There, it is n't full, but we can't stop to go for more now."

Esther appeared with the two sticks. Marian made a bundle of their old ragged clothes and gave it to Jennie to carry; then, taking the jar of

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water and the blanket, she followed Esther's lead as fast as she could.

When they got back to where the boys were, they found Davie still lying where he fell, sobbing, but not quite so wildly as at first.

Delbert, white-faced and shaken still, crouched beside him.

Marian examined the child as well as she could. The cut on the head was already ceasing to bleed, and the other scratches and bumps, ugly though they were, did not alarm her, but at sight of that little crooked leg her heart sank. How could she set a bone? She mistrusted that the under arm was injured too, and goodness only knew how much more.

She set Jennie and Delbert to making a stretcher out of the two sticks and the blanket, while she and Esther hunted up some sticks as nearly straight as they could find to make a temporary splint for the leg, till they could get back to the wickiup.

Every time they moved the leg, Davie screamed and beat at them with his good arm. He made no attempt to move the other one. At last Marian ordered Jennie and Esther to hold

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT

him and his pugnacious little arm, while she and Delbert managed the leg.

Jennie began to cry. "O Marian, don't! don't!" she sobbed.

Marian sat up and pushed back some loose strands of hair that straggled over her eyes.

"Jennie," she said, "we have *got* to hurt him. We can't help it. We have *got* to get him back to the wickiup, where I can fix it — as well as I can. If we don't get it right, he will be a cripple all his life. The pain won't kill him; just the pain won't, dearie. He may faint, but it won't be any worse. Don't make it worse by your crying."

So Jennie controlled herself as well as she could, and she and Esther, steeling their hearts, held the little arm and head and shoulder down, while Marian straightened the leg a little and arranged it so it would be held fairly steady as they carried him back. Then she turned him over and examined the arm. She could not see that it was hurt, but she knew it must be. As gently as she could, she lifted him on to the stretcher and gave him a big drink of water. Then they started back. Davie and Esther cried all the way.

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At the wickiup they laid him as gently as they could on the floor, but he screamed with the pain nevertheless. Marian set all three of the others to bringing up water, and she put some on in the little kettle over the fire.

She washed off the blood and dirt and tore her bathing-suit into bandages. Fortunately, it was clean, having been washed and boiled in fresh water, as it chanced, since she had used it, and she put a clean bandage around the head in the place of the rather dirty rag that Delbert had tied it with. Then she gathered all the little pieces of board they had, and while the others brought the water, she worked at splints.

When she had got these ready, she straightened her patient out on the floor on his back, and undid the first hasty bandaging and tried to straighten his leg till it would look and feel just like the other one. Jennie and Esther were too much wrought up by Davie's suffering to be of much service, but Delbert set his white lips together and held the screaming child firmly. At last they thought it seemed to be right and bandaged it up.

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT

"Marian," said Delbert, "his shoulder cracked awful funny just now."

After a little examination she said, "I guess it must have been twisted out of place a little and slipped back in. You see, he moves it now, and it certainly feels just like the other one, at any rate."

She felt him all over, but could find nothing more that seemed like broken bones, for which she was devoutly thankful.

She had an idea that Davie must not be moved at all for a week at least, and as a precaution against this she tied the bandaged leg to the side of the wickiup. For the life of her she could not remember how long it took a broken bone to heal, though she must some time have heard some one say; and of course the others were no wiser. Delbert had it running in his head that it was three weeks, but Jennie said, "No, that is how long it takes a chicken to hatch."

"Anyway," said Esther, "when it does grow together it itches awfully. I heard Mr. Faston say so."

Davie was so exhausted that he slept quite a while that afternoon, but by night he was awake and feverish, and, of course, very fretful.

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Marian kept pouring a little cold water on his bandages. She was sure that was the right thing to do, and she sat beside him, soothing him by every device she could think of and feeling her heart grow heavier and heavier as his fever rose and he struggled to turn and toss, and moaned and cried.

At night the little girls slept, and Delbert too to some extent, but there was no sleep for Marian. She was afraid there was some internal injury, not knowing that the fever was the natural result of the shock and hurt and only what any doctor would have expected.

She kept the bandages wet with cold water and wrung out hot cloths and applied them to the sore and lame spots. She bathed and rubbed and worked over Davie and she kept her voice cheerful and her eyes smiling, though a sickening fear held her heart.

It was days and days before she could feel at all easy, but the fever departed, the swellings went down, and no more lame spots came to light. Davie ate well and slept fairly well too. He began to regain his old sunny ways, and the tension on Marian's nerves relaxed. But, of

DAVIE'S PANAL HUNT

course, she had to stay by him pretty closely; so the other children performed the business of the day alone.

They attended to the garden and went down after each tide to see if there were any fish in High-Tide Pool, because, though they never found a whole school in there as they had on that day soon after their arrival, still there were very likely to be one or two lurking in the dark hole in the rocks, and one child would wade in and scare them out, and Delbert, standing ready with the spear, would gather them in. There were quite a number of places among the rocks where fish, and often big fish, were to be found after high tide. If they could get them that way, it saved going at night, and of course they could not well do that now. Anyway, it took quite a pile of *pitalla* to light them for a night's spearing, and *pitalla* was getting scarce in the near neighborhood.

CHAPTER X

DELBERT'S BIG GAME

DELBERT was getting tired of small game now. He began to plan for deer and pork. He made himself a new bow, larger and stronger than he had ever had before, with a new, strong string, and he made new arrows tipped with the best points he could get, and then he and Esther went deer-hunting.

Jennie always stayed with Marian, to help with Davie and because she really did not like hunting. She could not bear to kill things nor to see them killed. She carried her bow and arrows and shot at marks along with the rest of them, and sometimes at game, but she never seemed to enjoy it when she hit it.

As soon as it was light enough for them to see their way at all, Delbert and Esther would creep out and try for a close approach to the deer. Sometimes they did not come back till about noon, their only breakfast having been some raw vegetables carried with them, a few bananas

DELBERT'S BIG GAME

usually, which they carried in their quivers with their arrows, — sometimes not even that. Marian had no hopes of their ever getting a deer, but she never discouraged them. She and Jennie could manage Davie and tend the little burros, and the lessons could be studied in the afternoons. Davie, poor boy, certainly had to take his lessons with great regularity in those days; there was no way he could escape from them. Marian had had to loosen his bandages a number of times, but she did not yet dare take them off, though she had not kept him strapped to the house very long.

Marian now began to study very earnestly on the spinning and weaving problem. Rabbit-skin clothing was very unsatisfactory, as were the crocheted fiber things, too, though for different reasons, but little King David's misfortune had simply wiped every other kind out of existence. What with bandages and towels, there was not one single thin, worn garment left, only a little pile of frayed rags. Marian took her swim at night now. It was imperative that new clothes be acquired in some way, and she thought and thought, and was just beginning to see light on

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the subject when Esther came tearing in one morning, breathless and disheveled, to announce that Delbert had killed his deer.

His sisters could scarcely credit the story, but Marian took the path straightway, leaving Jennie to keep Davie company and give him his frequently demanded drinks of water and dampen his bandages and see if he had remembered from yesterday the little words written on the big clamshell. Marian found Delbert dancing a veritable war dance round a fair-sized buck. The thing had happened almost as far back as Little Pig Cove, where Davie had fallen, and, in a way, the two occurrences were somewhat similar.

Delbert and Esther had crept along that morning, as luck would have it, in time to witness a very serious disagreement between two bucks. The wind was in their favor; otherwise they might not have got quite so close to where the two were struggling together.

Perhaps one of them had thought they should cross the pasture on the level land, perhaps the other wanted the herd to hunt *panales* among the rocks. Delbert never knew what the quarrel was about. He had read of such things, but this

DELBERT'S BIG GAME

was his first chance to see anything of the sort. His blood leaped, and his eyes sparkled. Esther, a little behind him, practically inclined, fitted an arrow to her bow and shot. In her excitement the shaft went wide of the mark; so much so that no one, not even the deer, noticed it at all, a result which so sobered her that she did not try again. Delbert was actually forgetting to shoot at all, which Esther afterwards declared was worse than shooting and missing, even as wildly as she had.

But the stronger of the two bucks was beginning to push the other about, and in the scuffle they worked nearer and nearer to the edge of the rocks, though it is hardly likely this was other than accidental. Probably they were so taken up with their tussle that they did not notice where they were going. But presently a rock loosened and slipped, and then, before they could realize what was happening, a great mass of rocks and earth and bushes fell thundering down the steep to the level strip below.

Esther screamed and ran back; the group of deer which had been watching the combat also fled, and did not stop till they had reached the

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safety of the farther pasture. One of the fighting bucks was able to spring back and save himself, and he fled with the rest, but the other one went down with the avalanche.

Delbert, with a shout, ran forward and began clambering down where it was not so steep and



HE COULD SEE THE BUCK STRUGGLING TO FREE HIMSELF

appeared to be perfectly safe. In a minute he could see the buck struggling to free himself from the mass of débris. Even then he did not think of the trusty bow and arrows he had taken such pains with for this very occasion,

DELBERT'S BIG GAME

but, pulling out his long knife, he ran forward, and, by the time Esther had scrambled down beside him, the deer had ceased to kick, and Delbert was tugging at the rocks that still partly covered it. He sent her post-haste for Marian, and when they got back to him, he had the deer pulled out on a clear space and was already beginning to skin it.

Neither of them knew a thing about cutting up such an animal except what they dimly remembered used to be done at "Grandpa's" at hog-butcher time, but they managed to get the skin off after a fashion and they chopped and cut away at the rest, breaking the bones with a stone or the hatchets when they could not find a joint.

The discarded parts they would leave there, for it was too far to carry them to the watermelon-patch for fertilizer, and there were plenty of the scavengers of the sea waiting for them to go so that they could clean up after them. The good meat they tied up in the skin, and they swung it on a pole and carried it home between them, Esther carrying the hatchet and knives.

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It was past noon when, blood-stained and weary, they arrived at the wickiup. Jennie was getting anxious, and Davie was decidedly fretful. Delbert was then sent out to the salt reef to bring back all the salt there was there. They would need it besides what they already had in the wickiup, for Marian was determined not to lose a bit of that meat. She cleaned up the pail and hung it over the fire too, for the kettle would not hold all the bones. Some of the ribs were put to roast immediately, and then she set to work cutting up and salting and hanging up to dry. They stretched a line out in the sun and hung the pieces over that.

The skin would fill several long-felt wants, one of which was to provide Marian with sandals. Her leather ones had worn entirely out, and she had tried fiber ones without much success; she had even tried wooden ones.

Before that meat was half gone, — and they ate with true Indian appetites, — Delbert had determined to go after pork. There was a certain place on the farther end of the island where the pigs were pretty apt to be found, especially in the heat of the day. It was back from the shore, but

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low. In fact, it was a lagoon of water in the rainy season and contained water till near the rains again. In one or two places the fresh water oozed out all the year round. It was here that the young hunter proposed to make his attack.

The boy's idea was certainly novel. Good as his new bow and arrows were, he did not really suppose he could kill a hog with them except by accident. Perhaps a shot through the eye would be fatal, — he was not sure, — but if one was merely wounded there was danger of the rest showing fight, and — well, Delbert proposed to take no chances.

So where the big rocks, solid as the Island itself, overhung the bushes and little pools below, he would establish himself. Here he would be where the game could not get at him without making a *détour* of a quarter of a mile or so, and, after he had cut some brush and piled it properly, they could not see him either.

So with his hair rope he made a trap or snare across a much-used pig path, the rope running up over a crude but strong pulley and being tied about a good-sized cactus in the rocks above. With the butcher knife lashed to the end of a

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good stout pole and several such implements by his side he sat and waited patiently.

When it became pretty warm, the pigs assembled by the lagoon to drink and wallow in the mud. Before so very long the Muggywah appeared, with Jennie and Esther on board. They moored her out a little way and waded in. Quietly they drove the herd up toward the rocks and bushes, for, though not what could be called wild, the pigs would not permit a close approach. Presently one of them poked his nose through Delbert's waiting noose, and Delbert fairly held his breath till he stepped on, and then he gave a mighty jerk and began hauling in his rope over the pulley. He had caught the porker just back of one front leg, and the astonishment of that pig and his companions when he was thus lifted bodily into the air was enough, Delbert afterward said, to pay him for all his trouble.

From behind his screen of rocks and bushes he pulled the squealing animal up till he could reach him with a sort of shepherd's crook he had provided himself with; whereupon he fastened the rope and pulled the pig in out of sight of its companions and dispatched it.

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At the first squeal the girls had retreated most hastily to the Muggywah and pushed off, paddling back till they were well out of sight of the



DELBERT PULLED THE SQUEALING ANIMAL UP

herd of pigs, when they moored the craft again, this time to a rock on shore, and, ascending the hill, circled round back till they found Delbert cutting up the game.

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They did by it as they had done by the deer, — skinned it and carried the meat home tied up in the skin slung over a pole. They had a stick with a fork at one end, so each of the girls could take a fork, and Delbert managed the other end.

After that Delbert had no more taste for potting small game. He spent his time thinking up tricks and traps for deer and pigs. The deer were not such easy marks, but the pigs, being more stupid or less shy, could often be successfully bagged by practically the same tactics as he had used the first time.

Finally Marian suggested to him that it would be in the long run a great saving of time and an all-round better plan if he would build a good little pen somewhere and catch rather small pigs and put them into it, where they could fatten them up on garden stuff, of which they had plenty now, — the inferior bananas, for instance, — and then they could kill them when they chose. Jennie thought of a good place for a pen, close to the watermelon-patch, where there was a scrubby tree or two and a great overhanging rock that the pigs could go under for shade

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and shelter, and where they would not have to build a fence except on two sides.

The plan was put into operation and worked very well. They built the fence mostly of rocks piled up into a wall, and when it was finished, Delbert stocked it with youngsters that he was sure were quite old enough to leave their mothers. And the catching of them and the conveying of them across to the pen gave him much glee in spite of the hard labor involved.

The pork when killed was cured with salt and smoke. Marian did not have very good success with the last method, yet she managed it after a fashion. First she tried smoking the meat by hanging it over their chimney, but that was too hot, for it cooked it as well as smoking it and fried out all the grease too. But she did better when she built a smokehouse where a tiny fire discharged its smoke through a tunnel in a bank that terminated in a little cubby-hole affair of sticks and rocks where the meat was laid. They called it a smokehouse. It was a sort of doll smokehouse. The meat was always cut in rather small pieces and well salted, for Marian had a horror of spoilt meat.

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Soap was also attempted, — staggered at, Marian said. She knew little about it, but had seen Bobbie's mother making it, and she happened to know that ashes contained lye. The bottom of the wickerwork around the good demijohn had worn clear through. Marian carefully broke it away at the neck as well and took it off entirely. Then, tipping it upside down, she had a basket forsooth. She lined the sides with green banana leaves and filled it full of ashes.

She rigged it up where she could slip under it the old broken demijohn they had found in the cove and had used so much, which would hold about a gallon. Then she poured a little water on the ashes, and when that soaked in, a little more, and kept it up till she had it dripping through into the old demijohn below. Thus she leached out her lye. And if it did not seem very strong, she could boil it down in the porcelain kettle, which was the only thing she had that she dared use for that purpose, though she could boil things and even try out her grease in Mr. Cunningham's pail.

When the lye was stout enough to suit her, she put it into the two-quart glass jar or the bottles,

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and finally she started in with the soap-making. Well, she made it, but don't imagine it was nice white, sweet-smelling soap, such as you can buy, for it certainly was not. She made, first and last, a good many batches. Some of it would harden, and some would not.

What did harden she cut into cakes and put on a shelf to dry, where it would proceed to do so, shrinking itself up into the most absurd shapes of about half its former size. And what would not harden, she put into broken bottles or great shells or hollowed-out pieces of wood, but it was nearly all black in color and smelled — oh, like nothing in the world but very strong-smelling soap, but it would make a lather, after a fashion, and would take out dirt and grease.

CHAPTER XI

WHEREWITHAL SHALL WE BE CLOTHED?

MARIAN's grandmothers had known how to spin and weave, and as a little girl she herself had seen the old wheels and looms of her ancestors and had had their workings explained to her. But her childish mind had understood little, and the intervening years had wiped out much of that. Still, there remained a little, a wavering memory that she called up now and caused to supplement her grown-up knowledge of how such things must needs be worked out.

"I need two wheels, Delbert," she said, "and a band to go from one to the other as on mother's sewing-machine. One wheel must be small, and I think this spool will do. Jennie, you can wind off what 's left of the thread on to this little stick instead. But where can I get the other wheel? It must be big."

"There's the bottom of the old barrel," suggested Delbert. "We can make something else to put on the Muggywah to carry things in."

WHEREWITHAL SHALL WE BE CLOTHED?

“That’s so,” said Marian; “I could burn a hole through the center to run an axle through and another one to stick a handle in near the edge to turn it by.”

“But does n’t the wheel have to have a groove on it? Mamma’s machine wheel did,—grooved, you know, so the band could n’t slip off.”

“No, if I remember rightly, the big wheel on grandma’s spinning-wheel was very wide, or had a wide tire, and the band was so narrow there was no danger of its getting off. There probably was a groove on the little wheel, and our spool will fix that, you see, as well as if it had been made specially; but I don’t see my way clear yet to making that barrel-bottom carry the band. Maybe I can char the edge and make a groove in it.”

Investigation proved the bottom of the barrel to be made of two pieces which would come apart as soon as the pressure of the staves was removed. That, however, was remedied by nailing two bits of boards across the two pieces.

Where did she get the nails? Well, she had been saving them up for a long time. Two of them had been in Davie’s apron pockets when

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they came to the Island, and one had chanced to be lying in the bottom of the lunch-basket. The others had been picked up one time and another in bits of driftwood on the beaches. Most of these were too crooked and rusty to be good for much, but there were enough good ones to fasten the pieces of the barrel-bottom securely together. Then they knocked off the hoops and staves and released the round piece, and burned the center hole, and another near the rim to put a handle in to turn it by, as Marian had said.

By this time she had abandoned the idea of charring the edge and making a groove. She gathered a lot of little straight pieces about five inches long and varying in width, some round but most little flat pieces, and in the center of each she cut a V-shaped notch and pounded them down tight on the edge of the wheel till she had circled it entirely, in that manner, then tied two strings round near the ends of the little sticks to bind them so they would not loosen up and come off.

She decided to use the same iron bar for an axle for the wheel to turn on that she had used to burn the holes in it with, and she pounded it

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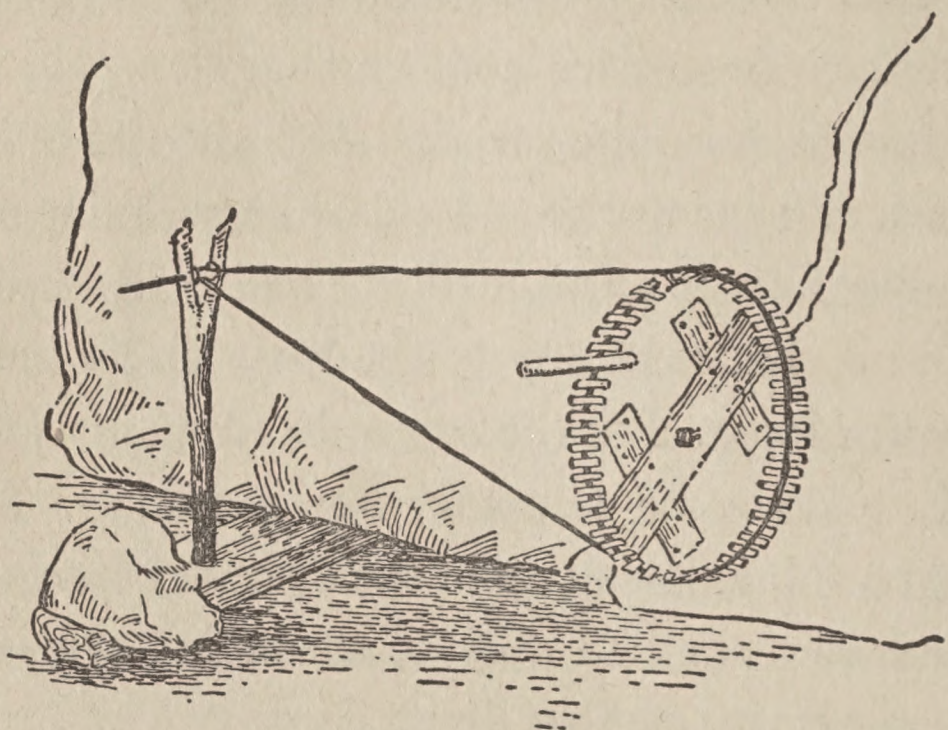
into a crack in the rock wall of the wickiup. The outer end of the bar had a sort of knob on it, — it might once have been a nut, — so that the wheel would not slip off, and to keep it from wandering in the other direction up to the wall she twisted a bit of rope round the bar and tied it to make a good-sized knot on that side.

She was not quite satisfied with the rim of her wheel, and she worked a long while, weaving and winding fiber in and out till she had it all smooth with no chance of any of the little pieces being knocked loose. For the rest of her apparatus she had to do some searching for materials. She spent a full half-day up in the pasture before she found what she had decided she must have, — a straight little tree that divided into two branches about three feet up. She cut it close to the ground and trimmed off the top, leaving the forks about six inches long.

A piece of driftwood flat on one side was taken for the base, and a hole was burned in the middle of it and enlarged till the forked stick could be inserted and made snug by driving in little pegs where it did not fit tight. Two little holes were burned through the two forks. She used a big

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old nail to do that, for she did not want such big holes as the bar would have made, — besides, the bar was tight in the wall now with the big wheel swung on it. A little round stick that fitted snug into the spool was then made into a spin-



THE SPINNING-WHEEL

dle. It turned nicely in the two little burned holes in the forks.

However, the standard was not heavy enough of itself to stand as firmly as would be required, so one end of the driftwood base was slipped under a rock projection, and then Delbert tugged in as big a rock as he could lift and set it down on the other end.

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Now all that was lacking was a band to connect the two wheels. Marian crocheted this out of fiber, just wide enough to fit the spool.

Any of the children could turn the big wheel. Even Davie would be able to when he got up. This left Marian's hands free to manipulate her cotton at the spindle.

Probably no spinning-wheel that was ever built was just like that one, but that did not disturb Marian's equanimity so long as her wheel would spin, and that it certainly did. True, her yarn was always lumpy; she never did get so she could make it nice and smooth, but she was convinced that that was the fault of the manipulation of the cotton, for the wheel itself went quite swiftly and smoothly.

After she had spun up all their cotton, which included that from the wild cotton-tree, which she mixed in with that of the now flourishing bushes in the garden, she got out the little bundle of the combings of their hair, which she had saved ever since about the first of their being on the island, and she finally got that all spun into yarn too. It took as much time to prepare her material for spinning as it did to spin it, but the

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children helped with the cotton. They all, Davie included, got to be quite expert at picking out cotton seeds.

The next problem was weaving. Delbert was unexpectedly helpful at that. He knew nothing of his grandmother's loom, but once upon a time he had seen a woman weaving a rag carpet, and on that never-to-be-forgotten trip with Clarence and his father he had seen an old Indian weaving on a loom.

As, however, the son of the old Indian had been blest with a number of fighting cocks which he was very desirous of showing off to the Americans, the small boy had bestowed most of his attention on the pugnacious birds instead of on the sober and less interesting loom; with the result that of the two processes that of rag-carpet weaving was really the clearer in his mind, though it had been witnessed earlier.

"There were two rollers," he told Marian. "One had the threads and one had the carpet, and there were two little frame things something like in a beehive, only with strings across, and when one jerked up it lifted up every other thread, and she'd throw the thing through and

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then the other would jerk up and that lifted the other every other thread, and she'd throw it back again and pound it down with a stick."

Marian drew a long breath. "Delbert," she said, "it sounds just like a nightmare."

Delbert stared. "Why," he said, "I can see it just as plain as can be, only I can't remember how it was made."

"Probably we could n't make one just like it, anyway," she consoled him.

Indeed, after much cogitating, she decided that an actual loom was beyond their resources, just at that time, at least, and concluded to weave by the simple method followed by the Indians in weaving the *fajas*,¹ or narrow sashes the men wear. They had seen this done by an Indian woman at the Port.

This calls for two pairs of forks set in the ground and two round sticks laid across the forks. The thread for the warp is wound round these sticks, from one to the other, over both and then under both, across and across, till the sticks are full.

A thin flat stick is then woven in under one

¹ Pronounced *fah'hahss*.

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thread and over the next of the top layer of threads, and then turned up on edge. This makes a space to pass the shuttle through, and the shuttle, by the way, is simply a slender stick with the filling wound on it.

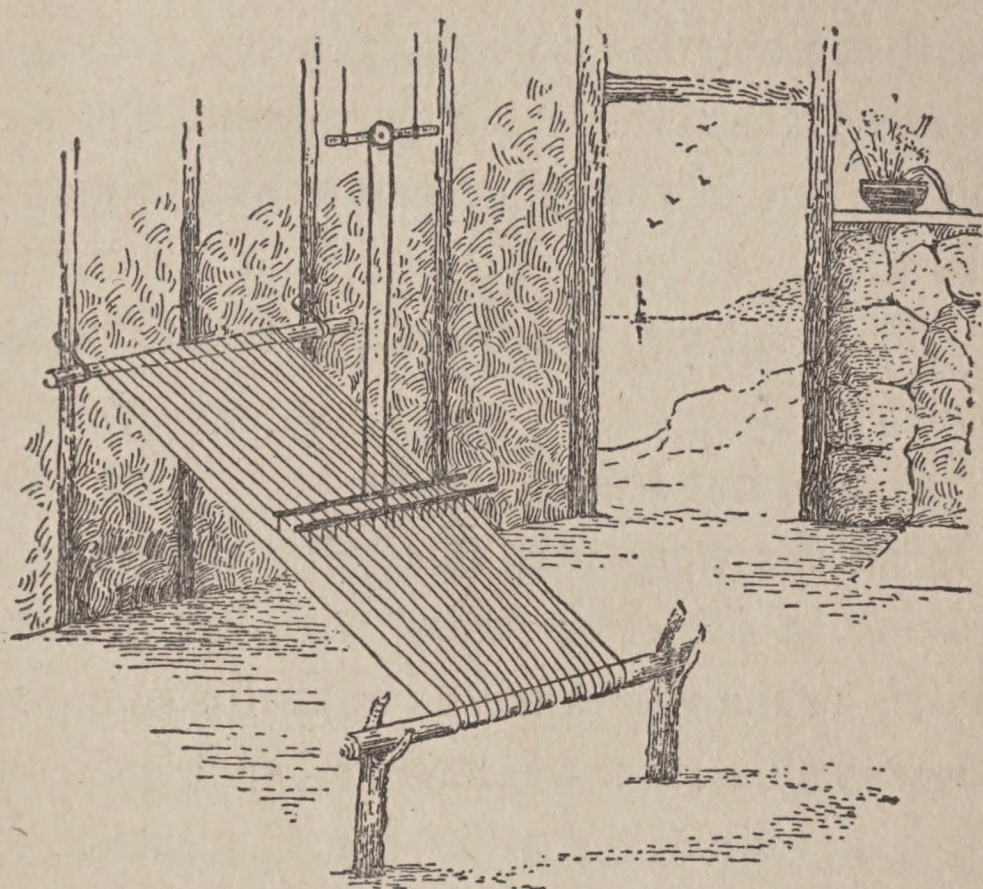
Then the flat stick is pulled out and woven in again and the process repeated again and again. As fast as is needed, the round sticks are turned over, thus turning the woven cloth underneath till all but a few inches of the warp has been woven. These threads are then cut and form the fringe on the ends of the *faja*.

Marian changed the plan a little. Two little crotches were set in the floor of the wickiup just at the right height to be handy to work at. They had to dig up the floor to get them set right, but when they were set, the children smoothed things over and packed the seaweed carpet down again.

A smooth round stick about as big as Marian's wrist was laid across the crotches. The other roller was much smaller around, and instead of being put on a pair of crotches was fastened to the side of the house with loops of rope, being just loose enough to turn easily in the loops.

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Then came the task of wrapping the warp round the two rollers. It had to be very even and snug, and every once in a while a thread would



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break and have to be tied, and altogether it called for a good deal of patience.

“I remember,” said Delbert, “that on the carpet the lady wove, this part was all red and green. She had a wide stripe of red in the middle and a wide stripe of green out a little way from it on both sides, and in between were narrow

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stripes, but, on the very outside, on each edge, there was a stripe of red just half as wide as the one in the center, and she explained it to me. She said it was so that when the carpet was all sewed together it would make a red stripe just the same size as the one in the middle. The rags that she put in the other way were all kinds of colors."

"How came you to remember all that?" asked Jennie.

"Dunno, but I do."

When the warp was all ready, Marian tried weaving in the cross-thread with her darning-needle, as she would have mended a sock; but that was altogether too long and tedious a process, so she hunted for a thin flat stick such as the Indians have, to weave in and turn up on edge to hold the threads apart, while she slipped through a shuttle which she made of a weed stalk. That did better, but was not wholly satisfactory, and Delbert kept thinking and thinking, trying to remember how that part of the work had been done on the carpet-loom. He could not get it entirely clear in his head, but he finally evolved a plan that answered the purpose.

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He arranged a pair of harnesses — though neither he nor Marian knew that that was their name — of two sticks wound with thread that looped down round the threads of the warp. These harnesses were connected by a rope that ran over a spool pulley that he fixed in the roof. Marian pulled this rope a little; and that lifted one of the harnesses and with it every other thread of the warp; she thrust through her weed-stalk shuttle, then pulled that harness down, which released the upheld threads, at the same time lifting the harness and with it all the other threads.

With this device she could accomplish two or three times as much in the same space of time, and she was not at all niggardly in her praise. Delbert glowed in consequence and, of course, Esther glowed with him. Even Jennie, who was most apt to be a little skeptical of Delbert's abilities, had nothing but the most respectful remarks to offer on the subject.

With this crude loom they could weave a piece of cloth about a foot wide by six feet long, and the children were all so interested and eager to work at it, and it was such a simple process, that

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they all easily learned; so Marian did not have all the weaving to do.

Marian had kept Davie's leg bandaged till she was very sure that it must be well knit together, and then she would not have him bear his weight on it for almost a week after. She was so very ignorant as to how such things should be attended to that she simply did not know what might happen. So she would undo it every day and bathe and rub and work with it and then do it up again, leaving it more and more loose and finally gave him permission to walk on it a little, but even then she kept the splints on it and provided him with a sort of a crutch.

When at last she discarded all bindings and allowed him to go free, they watched him most jealously. There was a queer little half-limp that Marian saw immediately. She hoped it would pass off in a week or so, and it did get better, but it never entirely disappeared. In spite of all her care, something had not been just right, and little King David never walked quite straight again.

Marion felt much worse about it than he did. As long as he could walk and run and swim, what did he care if one leg was a trifle shorter

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than the other? He could roam the Island wilds with the rest of them now, and that was joy enough.

Marian hoped his experience would teach him wisdom, and she did her best to impress it upon his mind that when she was not there Delbert's authority came next; that, as Delbert was the oldest, it was his duty to take care of the younger ones, and they must obey him.

Davie admitted that he had not really needed to look for *panales*, that he could plainly see he would have saved himself a great deal of pain and trouble if he had minded Delbert, and he even went so far as to say of his own accord that he wished he had. Also, at Marian's request, he promised to be "more good" in the future.

This was all she could hope for in that direction, and she took pains to instruct Delbert, when the others were not present, that, while she fully intended to back up his authority, at the same time he must take care not to issue orders that were not really necessary. She did not worry about his having trouble with the girls, for Esther would think anything Delbert wanted was the thing to do, anyway, and Jennie was

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growing into such a sensible little woman that her judgment could be depended upon as well as Delbert's own; but Delbert was to take care that he came pretty near letting Davie have his own way in the minor, unimportant things and only issue orders to him when there was some reason for it.

She also privately instructed the little girls to use their influence whenever they could to keep Davie within bounds and see that he gave Delbert as little trouble as possible. And there she had to leave the matter, trusting for the best, for she could not always go with them now, the spinning and weaving and the making of their clothes took up so much of her time. The children would go off of a morning and sometimes not be back till nearly noon, coming in laden with fish, or maybe clams, or with great armloads of wood.

While they were gone, Marian would clean up the wickiup and work a while among the great mass of poppies and nasturtiums she had growing about the house and paths; but the wheel and loom were the principal things. She spun her cotton and hair-combings as fine as she could,

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so as to make them go as far as possible, and then she was always looking for new material. She learned to work in a great deal of fiber without spinning, especially in the filling, and many and many a morning was spent in cleaning out banana fiber to be used in her cloth. Oh, there was always plenty to keep her busy till the children came back at noon. They would be hungry, and there would be dinner to eat, and then lessons, and afterwards they would help with whatever she had in hand.

And for the lessons she took up another labor, that of making books of rabbit-skins. She had Delbert bring her some new skins, and she used part of the old skin clothes, which had been promptly-discarded as fast as she had made new ones. She would trim her pages to the desired size and sew them together with fiber or hair. She used her little buttonhole scissors for the cutting, and of course she had real needles, though she thought that she could have made shift with thorns if she had had to. Her ink was brown.

Her pens were made of quills, and she could not write very nicely with them. Fine lines and

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graceful curves were not easy to achieve with them, so she discarded script and "printed" her books, as little children do before they have learned to write.

I think in time she would have worked out a printing-press to print her books on. Indeed, she did take the first step; she began to make type. It began accidentally almost. A pen had gone bad, and in fixing it her knife slipped and spoiled it altogether. Then, her mind on something else, she began toying with it idly and presently cut it square across and, pressing it down on her wrist, noted the neat *o* it printed there. Then it struck her that if it were inked it would make a better *o* than she could with a pen. She tried it, and it worked.

A second quill cut across and a section taken out made a *c*. It gave her an idea. Why not make a lot of type? It could not all be made with quills, but it would be amusing to see what she could do. She whittled out from bits of wood a capital *A*, and a *W*, and a *D*. She needed an ink-pad, and made it by padding a chip with cotton and then covering it with one of her last scraps of lawn.

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Her type worked well enough, but it would be too much bother to whittle out the whole alphabet. The little letters would be beyond her skill, anyway, and it would be slower printing one type at a time than it was writing them. But by that time she had thought of a way whereby she might make a few types serve for the whole alphabet, as all letters are composed of curves and straight lines.

The curves she could make of quills, which were finer than anything she could whittle out, and the straight lines she made on the end of a little bone, two of them, — one for long lines, one for short ones. Four quills properly cut furnished her with an assortment of curves, and she could hold all six in her left hand between the first and middle fingers, which was better than laying them down and picking them up each time she wished to change. It was too much bother to change with every letter, too, so she would take one and make all she wanted of that kind clear across the page, then she would change and make all of another kind, and so on. She soon learned to gauge her distances properly.

It was no quicker than writing, but she could

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put her lines closer together, thus getting more on a page, and her letters were more uniform, and there were no more blots. It used the ink up faster than plain writing, for it dried out from the pad, but, as it chanced, there were plenty of ink materials.

The children were delighted; it was easier to read than the old-time script, and it looked so neat and businesslike.

In those soft skin books Marian put every poem or set of verses that she could remember. She began with Mother Goose rhymes and graded on up to "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "Thanatopsis," which she had learned to speak at school. Into one book went Bible verses and several whole chapters from the holy book, notably the twenty-third Psalm and the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

Anything and everything pleased the children. They learned to read everything and to repeat a great deal by heart. Esther especially was a perfect little parrot and could reel off all kinds of lofty sentiment of the meaning of which she had no conception. Jennie and Delbert always had to study longer on a thing, and Davie, where

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lessons were concerned, was a little lazybones. Davie never learned anything that he did not have to, and Marian had such a time getting the fundamentals well rooted in his memory that she never tried to plant anything there that was not necessary. He was as quick and keen as any of them in other things, though, and it filled Marian's heart with pride to see how fearless he was in the water and how little he was behind the others in that element.

As fast as she could, Marian replaced the rabbit-skin clothes with the newer, better ones, but the style of making was the same, — low-necked, sleeveless dresses with rather scant, short skirts, for material was scarce. Delbert still clung to his "loin-cloth," and Marian was more than willing, it was so much simpler than trousers. Even David, for the sake of wearing some of the product of their combined labor, consented to be clothed like Delbert, and as he found a loin-cloth did not impede his actions in any way, he continued to sport one from then on. There was one thing in favor of the new clothes: they certainly wore well; there was no shoddy in them.

Gradually Jennie spent more and more time

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at the wickiup. For one thing, the children did not like to go off and leave Marian alone all the morning, and as Davie was growing so big that he could help appreciably, there was really no need for so many of them on the morning excursions.

So Jennie stayed with Marian. Her particular forte was making baskets. Jennie could make beautiful baskets. She wove them of straws and tough weeds and palm-leaf. Her only teachers were her memories of certain kindergarten lessons, the big basket they had brought their lunch in, and a rather blurry picture down in one corner of the old newspaper of a half-dozen Indian baskets with strange designs. For the rest she taught herself, and when she once got interested in the work she wanted to do nothing else.

It was Jennie who made a basket of split palm-leaves to take the place of the old barrel on the Muggywah. She would sit for hours on the seaweed carpet of the wickiup, leaning against the pile of bedding, and weave and weave, the work growing much faster under her slim brown fingers than it did under Marian's. Indeed, after Jennie took to making baskets, Marian and the

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rest quit. What was the use of their wasting their time when Jennie could do it so much better and quicker?

She made big baskets to carry wood and clams in; she made little ones to hang up in the wickiup to drop little pieces of moss and seashells into. She loved the little ones best. She made them in patterns. She colored some of her material a dull red with juice from the cactus fruit and some of it brown with Marian's ink. She used some kinds of seaweed, and she made one basket with a row of starfish around the edge and over the handle, and she made some with lids. When Marian's hat wore out, Jennie made her a new one, weaving it as she did her baskets and trimming it with sprays of seaweed and shells.

The ordinary rains did not inconvenience them, but when they were very severe the wickiup leaked a little down the rock wall. They had not been able to make the roof perfectly tight there, and the water, when the wind blew hard, would find its way down; then they would have to remove whatever was hanging or leaning against that side, and Marian would turn back the seaweed carpet so that it should not get wet,

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and the water would run down the wall and soak into the sand and rocks of the floor. They enjoyed the big rains, though. They could always keep warm and dry, and the wickiup was big enough to allow each one to move about a little and follow whatever occupation he or she chose.

It was on a rainy day that Marian conceived the idea of weaving up the old rags that had been their clothes into new cloth, though the task was not finished on that one day by any means, nor in two. She had used up everything she had on hand in the way of thread; so she made the warp out of new hair clipped from her own and the children's heads with the buttonhole scissors; and with the same sharp little instrument she cut the old rags into strips, as narrow as she could and have them hold together at all, and wove them in as rag carpets are woven; and lo! she had new towels, and they needed new towels very much.

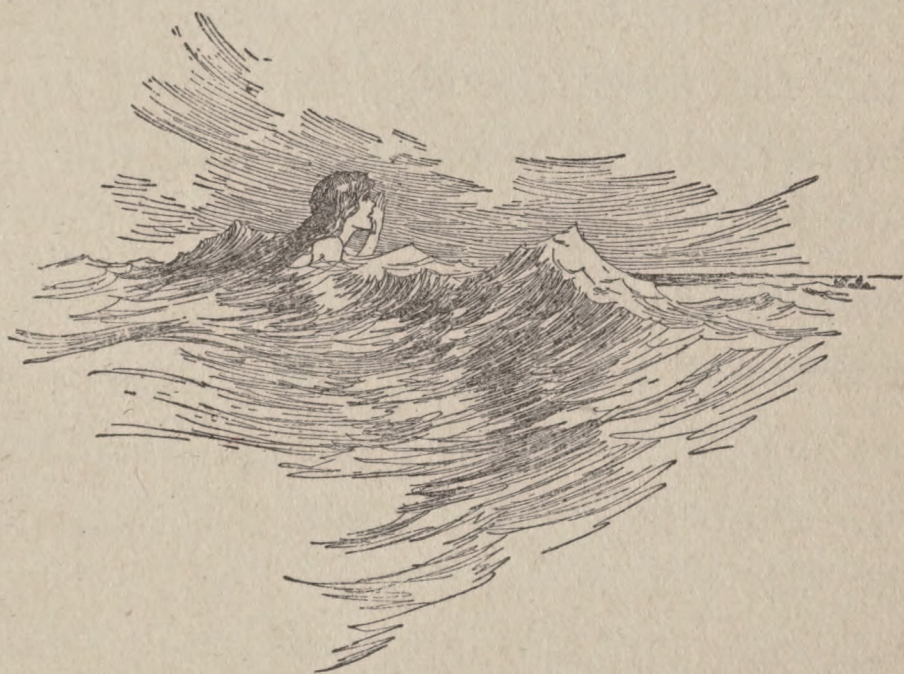
So time passed, rainy season and cold weather and rainy season again. Often at night they built brush fires out on the rocks where they could be seen a long way off. Their signal flag

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had been blown down one stormy night and lost altogether.

Sometimes, far out, they saw canoes and started out in the Muggywah to intercept them, but the canoes always went on their way too fast and too far to be overtaken.

Once, when the children were gone in the Muggywah after eggs, Marian sighted a canoe



IT SEEMED AS IF THEY MUST SURELY HAVE SEEN OR HEARD HER

and started to swim out to it with only a piece of driftwood to help keep her afloat. She got so close to them that it seemed as if they must surely have seen or heard her, but they put up their sail, and, despairing, she had to see them depart. Giving up the chase, she rested a little

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before battling her way slowly back, but she arrived so tired that she could scarcely drag herself out of the water and across the beach, to find the children returned and hunting desperately for her.

Then one day they hauled the Muggywah up on the beach for repairs. Two of the sticks driven through the burnt holes had broken, and they were going to put in new ones. They took it apart and rolled the logs up beyond the soft sand into the shade of a mesquite tree that grew at the foot of the hill.

The next day they found the material they had got was not so good as they had thought it was, and so they spent the day hunting for something better. And that night came the second big storm.

CHAPTER XII

DISASTER AND A NEW TASK

THE storm was fully as severe as the one that had welcomed the children to the Island, though they did not realize what they were in for till midnight. When it began to blow so strong that they were really sure a storm was coming, Delbert took their best ropes and securely moored the logs of the Muggywah to the tree, thinking it barely possible that the waves might reach up to them if the wind kept on increasing. And such a terrible wind as it threatened to be!

They turned the little burros loose with their mothers, — there were four of them that year, — and the one little pig that they happened to have in the pen was also turned out to seek its shelter where it chose. The little girls tried to get it into the wickiup, but it was wild and escaped them, and Marian told them to let it go, that it would take care of itself.

They gathered in the best of the melons, for there was no knowing if there would be one left

by morning, the sandy point was so low; and they piled up a great stack of wood and *pitalla* by the fireplace; and then it was too dark to do any more.

The wind howled and the waves broke on the beach like mighty thunders. The thatch of their roof struggled to be gone, and the water poured down the wall in a steady sheet. Fortunately, it could soak through the sand and rocks of the floor and run off down the hill as fast as it came in; otherwise they would have been flooded. The window and the storm doors were tied as tightly as possible, and Marian watched them closely and thanked her stars that she had insisted on taking such endless pains to have everything about the house solid and sure.

Of course, they were protected somewhat by the cliff, and the girl shuddered to think what would have happened had they not been. She imagined how it would seem to go crawling through the fury of the storm, holding to one another's hands, beaten to the ground and half drowned, and finally reaching the old Cave, the only possible other shelter, and crawling in, soaked and chilled, to lie, packed like sardines in a box, till morning.

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It was not a pleasant picture; she was glad to come back to the reality, — the interior of the wickiup, somewhat disorderly with so much wood and everything piled away from the rock wall, but warm and dry and safe; Delbert stretched out by the fireplace, a great strong boy, his eyes, steady and straightforward, regarding the flames as they spluttered in protest against the water that found its way down the chimney; Davie sprawling at her feet, sleeping in utter carelessness of the storm, well knowing that whatever happened he would be taken care of; the two girls on a blanket beyond him, awake, and Jennie a little nervous but Esther calmly confident that everything would turn out all right, — that they were, and would continue to be, safe.

Marian's throat swelled a little as she watched them. How dear they were, every one, and so big and strong now, even Davie! Surely now, when this storm was over and the Muggywah repaired, they might start back to the Port. The first few miles outside the shelter of the bay would be the worst. The waves were always very big and high out there, but after that, —

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well, they might not make very good time, but what mattered it if they were a week on the way, so they got there at last? They could take food and water with them, though for that matter they could go hungry and thirsty if need be; what mattered it so they got home?

All that night the wind tore at them; all the next day it screamed about their ears, and the breakers on the beach were like great guns of a battle. The next night it calmed down, and the next morning they sallied forth to take account of the damage done.

They found a considerable amount of damage, — the felling of many banana plants, half the patch in fact, the complete disappearance of every melon vine on the point, every plant in the garden beaten into the ground, the little pig gone, and their carefully gathered woodpile scattered to the four winds. But all this sank into insignificance beside the fact that not one log of the Muggywah was left to them. The tree had been uprooted and washed away bodily, and all search up and down the beaches revealed no trace of it. The great storm had cast many treasures at their feet, but they were so dispir-

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ited over their losses that they could not be very joyful over the gains.

Mechanically they lugged the wood up out of reach of the waves, which were still pounding angrily, gathered in a number of new bottles, and took note of the great masses of seaweed that would make fresh carpet when it was dry. But with all the wood there was no log like those of the lost Muggywah, and with all their gazing to sea they could not see anything that might of a bare possibility be an uprooted tree.

They fashioned a poor sort of a raft out of the best pieces of the driftwood, and with its aid explored the outer reefs and *esteros* and even as far as the egg islands. The raft was clumsy and slow and generally unmanageable, and Delbert said that it made him sick just to look at it, but they wanted to go longer distances than they could swim, and the float was made to serve.

At the end of about two weeks, however, Delbert said: "It's no use, Marian. We are only wasting time. The Muggywah simply did not lodge anywhere near us. Maybe it did n't lodge at all; it may be going yet, in three different directions, and our best ropes with it."

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"Yes, more's the pity, Delbert. I hate losing your hair rope about as bad as losing the Muggy-wah herself."

"Well," — and the boy's jaw set solid and square, — "there's not a bit more use crying over a lost boat than there is in crying over spilt milk. We can't find it, and we have n't got a stick of timber fit to put into a new one either. We can't walk back to the Port; it would be hundreds of miles to follow the coast line, and we should be sure to get lost if we tried any short cuts. If Davie was a couple of years older, I'd say to risk it. But we are n't going to wait two more years. I want to see mother." His voice broke a little, but he conquered it and went on. "There is only one thing to do; it has been in my head kind of hazy for some time, but now I've got it clear; we must fix the old canoe, Marian."

"How?" asked Marian quietly, for she had never been able to think of any way to do that.

"Well, we must put a framework in the side that is gone, the hole, you know. I'm not sure yet just what is the best material, but I think palm-leaf stems would be, — we can burn holes

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through the canoe to fasten to, — a solid framework, that will not break and give way at any little tap, and as near the shape of the other side as we can make it. Then we'll weave in basketwork, strong as we can, and, as we go, pack all the cracks full of fiber and *pitalla* tar. I've got it all studied out, Marian. We'll weave the basketwork double with a space between, and in that space we can put stones, just enough to make that side of the canoe as heavy as the other. We'll mix the fiber and tar together and pound it down as we go along, and when it's all finished, if there come any cracks, we can fill them in with cotton and tar, and if we can't jam it in tight enough so but what it still leaks some, why, one of us can bail all the time."

"Do you know how to make *pitalla* tar?"

Delbert threw up his head.

"Yes, I do! That is *one* thing I saw made that I paid enough attention to to know how it was done. Bobbie's Uncle Jim used to try it out. Don't you remember? He had a place fixed down by the old blacksmith shop, and we kids were always fooling around there, and he showed and explained all about it to us."

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"And for a wonder you listened?" asked Jennie.

"For a wonder I listened," he answered, smiling grimly.

"Good boy!" said Marian. "From now on we bend our energies to the canoe. When it is done, we won't wait for anything more, — once we can sail it, — we won't wait for anything more except a still day. The first still day we'll start for home."

Delbert had a great time making a retort to extract his tar. He found a place near High-Tide Pool where there was a hole in the rock which he could utilize, and he built it up with stones and earth till it suited him.

Then they began gathering the *pitalla*. They had gathered everything near them for the fireplace, but they knew where there was plenty more to be had, so they went after it, — up the *estero*, past the tide-flats toward the lagoon. There they could gather it, pile it high on the clumsy raft, and float it home as they had brought the thatch-grass. It was slow work, but there was no other way. It was not so easy to get down to the *estero* as the grass had been,

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for the *pitalla* is thorny indeed, but they managed it somehow, because they had to. They could gather a good deal on the shores nearer home, but nowhere was there such an abundance as beyond that particular *estero*.

They decided, however, never to leave the home Island alone. They had seen several canoes since the storm, and they hoped one might come into San Moros and near enough to be signaled. Delbert and the girls were perfectly capable of gathering the *pitalla* and bringing it home; so Marian and Davie stayed at home to do the work there and watch the bay for canoes.

Marian put in a little garden, for they could not tell how long it might take them to finish the canoe, and she planted part of the melon-patch over again, thinking that what they did not reap perhaps some one else would. She straightened up the bananas and mended the fence where they had dragged the old canoe out of it.

As soon as they had got quite a little pile of *pitalla*, they began to burn it in the retort, and some one had to watch that and attend to it. Delbert was sure that he lost a great deal of tar

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because his retort was so crude. He was sure Bobbie's Uncle Jim got much more out of a pile of *pitalla* than he did, but he had to manage as best he could. And the tar did come; it trickled down into the little dishpan slowly but surely, and Delbert, impatient though he was, would set his face toward the *estero* and bring more *pitalla*.

Every morning the three were in such a hurry to get off that they did not stop for a hot breakfast, and they took only a light lunch with them for noon, but Marian always had a good hot meal ready for them upon their return. The destruction of the garden was a drawback, for the little new one was not of service yet. Still, not all the plants had been destroyed by the storm; some had been rescued, straightened up, washed, and tied to stakes, and were pursuing the even tenor of their way again, and, of course, the turnips and carrots that had already attained their growth were as good as ever, and the newly planted seeds would soon be making quite a showing.

Twice since the storm Delbert had killed a deer, and the meat was not allowed to spoil. What could not be cooked immediately was

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salted and dried, some of it smoked, and all was watched carefully to thwart the flies. When the raft came back at night it would bring game of some kind, — a rabbit killed in the brush of the shore or a fish speared on the way down the *estero*. These would be put into the kettle and left simmering over the coals till morning, or wrapped in green banana leaves and buried in the hot coals, to be raked out hastily for breakfast; and of the remnants Marian would make a stew to have piping hot for supper, flanked by a dish of greens which she and Davie had picked.

As they ran across them, the children brought in other things that they needed, — tough sticks, or mescal plants to make ropes of, — and Davie was always waiting for them on the pier to see what the particular booty of the day was and to carry it up to the wickiup to show Marian. And Marian always had warm water ready for them, and when they had washed off the day's accumulation of dirt and combed the tangled hair and braided it anew, — they did not stop for that in the morning, — they would sit down and eat; and they always ate all Marian had prepared for them, too, and then filled up on bananas and

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chattered and chattered like a flock of birds all the time. Then they would go down and unload the *pitalla* and carry it over to the retort, and by that time they were ready to settle down in the wickiup in front of the *pitalla* fire for a rest.

There would be a very short session of school then, a little reading from the rabbit-skin book, a review of the multiplication or division tables, and a spelling-lesson. It was not much; Marian had got them about as far as she could without books, and it did not seem as if it mattered so much, now that the home-going was, as you might say, in sight. They always sang in the evenings. Their mother had come of a musical family, and Marian had taught them all the songs she knew, and there was not one of them that could not sing sweet and clear and strong. Marian gloried in their voices and knew that her mother would too.

And she always had to tell them a story after lessons were over. They said that was Marian's lesson. She had become quite expert at it. Usually it was a rehashing of some dimly remembered thing that she had read, but sometimes it was a pure product of her imagination.

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If it was an Indian story, why, so much the better, for the tribe never forgot that it *was* a tribe, though sometimes the Indian names and pretenses would be dropped for several weeks, only to be taken up with renewed vigor later.

When Marian thought that it was long enough since they had eaten, and about bedtime, — her watch had stopped the year before, — they would go down to the water and have their swim. Sometimes the water was pretty cold, but they were so used to it that they did not stop for that any more. Once in a while Davie was left asleep at the wickiup, but as a rule he went with them.

They would take the raft away out from shore and have oceans of fun plunging from it, diving, swimming races, floating, in short doing everything that could be done in the water.

A favorite game was “rescue.” One of them would fall overboard with a yell of “Oh, save me!” and then do as little as possible to help himself, while another one would dive in after him and those on the raft would paddle it off a little, so as to give the gallant rescuer scope for his or her endeavors. They got so that there was not one of them — except Davie — who

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could not take care of himself and one other in the water, and even Davie could make a very respectable stagger at it.

Delbert and Esther were the best swimmers; they could do the most difficult stunts. In a straight swim, though, Marian would outlast Esther, while Jennie fell considerably behind her.

Moonlight nights were best for this play. Marian, her paddle in hand, watched them with exultation in her heart, they were so strong and full of grace; and they were hers, — she had thought, studied, prayed, watched, and worked for them. Once she had read a novel whose hero had been described as being “straight and handsome as a young god.” That was the phrase that always came into her mind out there on the raft as she watched Delbert, — “straight and handsome as a young god,” — but she never said it aloud.

And Jennie, — puny, sickly little Jennie, always the least pretty of them all, — how slim and lovely she stood in the moonlight, her hair in two dripping braids, her eyes like shining stars! It fairly took Marian's breath away sometimes to realize what a winsome beauty was

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growing to be Jennie's. She had always expected Esther to be pretty, but that Jennie should blossom out like this!

Sometimes the water was full of phosphorescence. This was, of course, more noticeable on dark nights, and then every move they made was a pale blaze. That was better than moonlight; it was magic; it was a fairyland made real. Then they quit playing they were Indians and played they were mermaids and sea-goblins of the deep. The raft was a Spanish galleon wrecked in ages past and drifting still, filled with treasure. Just see how the jewels gleamed! Or it was a great sea turtle, ridden by sea nymphs, plunging and careering, unable to throw off its tormentors. Then it was foam of the waves, unsubstantial and formless, and the fish that came scurrying by in silver flashes were chased in glee.

It was always hard to coax them back to land on these nights, but sooner or later they had to go, and they would then huddle about the fire a little, drying their hair, before they lay down to sleep soundly till morning. Then early the three would be up and off, generally taking their break-

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fast with them to eat on the way up the *estero*, while Marian and Davie took up their daily tasks.

Davie found it a little lonesome with Delbert and the girls gone all day, but he was such a sunny-tempered little chap that he managed pretty well after all. There were his lessons, which went much faster and smoother than they had done at first, and then he helped Marian do everything, even cook. And he made little boats and sailed them, and he rode on Jackie, who was growing very steady and sedate this year, and he gathered in wood and crabs. Always he watched for little shells and other treasures of the sea, to bring to Marian for her inspection, as she sat weaving or writing in the rabbit-skin books. It was at this time that she wrote out "Thanatopsis," all but six lines that she could not for the life of her remember.

She kept her subconscious mind on the retort and went out every so often to attend to it, for all things now were subordinate to the tarring of that canoe. When the little dishpan was full of *pitalla* tar and they had a nice big pile of *pitalla* on hand, they decided to begin on the

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work. So they dragged the canoe into the water at the pier and paddled it round to the other side of the Island and dragged it up high on the beach not far from the tar retort. Then they began the main task to which all these weeks had been preparatory.

Marian left the housework and cooking to the girls; they could spear the fish and gather the greens and cook them, they could boil down the salt water and take it out on the raft to the reef and bring back the dry salt, and they could watch the dry meat and gather the bananas. The older sister and Delbert devoted their time to the canoe. There were holes to be burned and the toughest and strongest of pegs to be whittled and driven in; there was much testing of materials, much discussion of ways and means, much sighting and squinting and balancing. This work must be done right.

Slowly the framework grew. The basket work would be made entirely of the split palm stems, or, if there were not enough of them, they would put the next best thing on the top.

They tipped the old canoe into the best position to work on and propped it up with stakes

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and stones. And when the framework was finished, they called in Jennie for her opinion on the next step. So she worked too, for none of them could weave so well — so neatly and tightly — as she. And as she wove, Marian and Delbert began packing in the tarred fiber. It took a lot of it, but Delbert thought that, if they ran out entirely, they could, perhaps, use some kinds of seaweed at the top where it would not matter so much.

Egging-time came and went. They stopped work long enough to go for eggs once, and then Davie and the girls went alone, or Davie and Esther, while the three older ones worked steadily on the canoe.

They had it about two-thirds done and were shifting it into a different position one day and propping it up, when Esther and Davie came running down the hill laughing. They had been off in the pasture. As soon as she got within calling distance Esther began to shout, "Davie's found a *panal*! Davie's found a *panal*!"

"Don't believe it," said Delbert shortly.

"Have," declared Davie, coming up with a grin reaching from one ear round to the other.

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"Have, too. 'S whopper. Heap big chief me. Find whopper *panal*. All the tribe eat."

Marian smiled indulgently. "Great brave, Hiawatha! Where did you find it? Where Pocahontas had just pointed it out to you?"

"No," with great scorn; "I saw it myself. *I* pointed it out to *her*."

"Is that so, Pocahontas?" asked Marian, still smiling.

"Yes, it is," declared Esther; "and it is a big one, bigger than we ever had before, and we have been by it lots of times and none of us ever saw it before. Come on, Marian, let's have it for supper. We have n't had one for a year."

"I guess we have n't," agreed Marian. "Somehow *panales* are not very plenty. What do you say, Delbert? Shall we knock off work and take in this newly discovered and most marvelously large *panal*?"

"All right," said Delbert, throwing down his stake. "Let me fix the retort first."

So they all trooped off and were soon *en route* to the pasture. It was a big *panal*, and it was so near to the path that it was a thousand

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wonders that they had never seen it before, with all those little workers flying back and forth. But then it was a long way from the wickiup, and they had been so busy with the canoe lately that they had not been much in the pasture; and probably it had grown pretty fast and a few weeks earlier would not have shown much.

At any rate, they took their toll of the little workers now, taking care to leave enough of the center for them to build on again and going off with their booty in the kettle and pail well covered. They had not gone far when they came upon the deer, and, of course, Delbert must try for a shot. He could have got one, a little fawn, but his heart forbade. It was such a dainty little darling that he would n't have minded catching it alive, but as long as there was other food he would not kill it.

It was past noon as they wended their way back. Those who were not carrying honey gathered up wood. Davie was ahead. As they came out by the rock where the path wound smoothly down to the pier, Davie stopped suddenly and let his wood fall to his feet.

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“Look!” he said excitedly. “What’s that? Is that a canoe by the pier?”

They all looked.

“Canoe!” said Delbert in a queer, quiet voice.

“That’s the launch.”

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE LAUNCH CAME BACK TO SMUGGLERS'

WHEN the Hadleys had left Mexico they had turned their steps toward California. They had some friends there, but the place they finally bought was not near any of them. It was many miles inland, too, for Mrs. Hadley had said she did not want to live by the ocean.

"All my life I have been fond of it," she said, "but now I don't want ever to have to see it again."

So they had settled down on a little fruit farm in the interior.

They are not cheap, those little fruit farms of California. The price asked per acre is usually enough to make your head swim till you get used to it, and the Hadleys were not rich, which explains the fact that every cent they had in the world was not enough to pay for that farm. But they paid over what they had and set out to raise the rest from the farm itself. In a few years they had succeeded.

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Neither of them was old yet; they could still work, and did work. But Mrs. Hadley's face was quieter than it had been in former years, though she went about patient and cheerful, a busy, kindly woman much beloved by her neighbors.

Mr. Hadley was older than his wife by a number of years. He was beginning to turn gray when their sorrow came to them, and his hair whitened rapidly after that, and somehow he did not seem so tall as he had been; but, aside from that, one would not have seen any great change in him.

They made a fair living, nothing more, out of the farm. Sometimes there is drought, you know, or there is failure of crops for some other reason, or the crop is too large and then prices go down, and transportation takes most of the profits in any case. And because of all these things the Hadleys had been in California over six years before they felt free to take a little visiting-trip among their friends who lived in the State.

They had to plan most carefully then to keep within the limits of their very modest income, for already there loomed on the horizon of the

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future the expenses of the coming season. But they went and had a good time, being heartily welcomed everywhere, and nowhere more heartily than at the Harrises', the last place on their list. The Harrises had been old neighbors at the Port, being in fact none other than the family who numbered among its members the Clarence to whom the Island Hawks felt that they owed so much.

Clarence was not a boy now; he was a man grown, but he still lived at home and helped his father run a fruit ranch of about four times the size of that of the Hadleys. A man grown he was, but in many respects the same boy, as was proved by the way his widowed sister's children trailed at his heels all day.

The Hadleys arrived in the evening, and it was not till the next day at noon that the conversation turned upon their loss at the Port. The Harrises had heard about the happening at the time, for Mrs. Harris corresponded with Bobbie's mother, and they had received, too, several newspapers containing reports of the occurrence, these having been marked and sent out by Mr. Cunningham to various persons to

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whom he knew the event would be of interest. But there were, of course, details that they had never heard, and it was only natural that they should ask for the story and that Mr. Hadley should tell it over as they sat about the table after the main part of the meal had been eaten.

Clarence was sitting between his lively little niece and nephew, cracking walnuts for them, picking the meats out into their eager little hands, and making little boats and turtles of the shells. The little boy had slipped down and brought him the mucilage-bottle, a piece of stiff paper, and his grandmother's best shears, purloined from her basket with many sideways glances.

Mr. Hadley told the tale quietly. They were undemonstrative people, and after these years they could talk of this quite without emotion. He told it all, — all the little incidents, — how Esther had been sent for the forgotten bathing-suits the evening before; how Marian had started out without sufficient wraps and Bobbie's mother had made her take her big cape; of the question Mr. Faston put to them as they were

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going down to the pier and Delbert's answer. Of the long search and nothing to pay for it save the little handkerchief beaten into the sand. The others asked a question now and then during the recital, but Clarence sat silent, letting no word of the story escape him, but making no comments as he worked quietly on the little shell boats.

When Mr. Hadley finished, he laid his ship-building tools down by his shell-littered plate, and, looking into the white-haired father's eyes, spoke.

"Mr. Hadley," he said, "Smugglers' Island was not within fifty miles of the Rosalie Group."

In one of the busy seaport towns of our Pacific Coast Mr. Hadley sat at a little restaurant table, eating an inexpensive meal alone. Every cent that he and his wife possessed in the wide world had gone into that little fruit farm up in the hills, and now by means of a mortgage on it he had raised money enough to carry him back to the coast to take up the old heart-breaking task. His passage was already engaged on a steamer to sail for the Port the next day. Mrs. Hadley

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remained on the farm to carry on the work there as best she could alone.

If this were a model story, Clarence would most assuredly have gone with his old neighbor, but in real life people do not start on journeys unless they have the railroad or steamship fare, which Clarence did not have. It takes money to travel, and ordinary people cannot get money so easily that they can afford to spend it on anything that is not strictly necessary. Certainly Clarence wanted badly enough to go and show the way to Smugglers' and search for his old playmates, but the best he could actually do was to make a map of the coast and San Moros as well as he could remember it, and give it to Mr. Hadley, with the name of the old Indian who had told him about Smugglers' in the first place, but who, doubtless, had slept with his fathers for years now.

What did Mr. Hadley expect to find on Smugglers'? Certainly not his living children, for had they lived through the storm, even though the launch were disabled or destroyed, Pearson would have found some way to get back. No; it was only a confirmation of death which the

father looked for at best, something to show where and how his children had perished, — some fragment of the launch, perhaps, all but buried in the sand.

As he sat eating, there came slowly into his consciousness a face at a table near him. He looked at it. Surely it had not been there when he came in. Whose was it? Why did it seem to claim his attention more than the dozen others on all sides? He tried to resume his meal, but — who was that man? where had he seen that face before?

In a blinding flash it came to him. It was Pearson! Pearson, the man whom Cunningham had sent with Marian and the children in the launch. But, of course, that could not be. Pearson was dead, — dead these nearly seven years ago, — but this fellow —

Just then the man looked up and met his gaze. It was the look of a complete stranger. Mr. Hadley politely dropped his eyes. But he did not drop his thinking, and so keenly conscious was he of that face that he knew instantly when the other rose from the table.

Mr. Hadley glanced up again. The other was

leaving his dinner almost untouched. Mr. Hadley himself arose. His memory for faces was remarkably good; that man had Pearson's face, he might be a brother; at any rate, he would speak to him; it could not be Pearson, but why was he leaving his dinner uneaten?

The man, who was sauntering out apparently without haste, glanced back and saw Mr. Hadley advancing toward him, and a look came over his face that Mr. Hadley did not mistake. In a flash he knew it *was* Pearson; impossible as it seemed, it *was* Pearson, and he was afraid!

A moment or two later a placid policeman just turning a corner was knocked nearly off his feet and out of his dignity by a man coming from the opposite direction, a man past middle age with white hair and flashing eyes.

"Officer," he cried, grasping the representative of the law by the arm, "arrest that man! the one in brown with the striped coat!"

"What's the charge?" inquired the policeman.

"There will be charge enough," cried the other; and from his earnestness and the rapidity with which the striped coat was disappearing

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down the street, the policeman concluded that the owner of it needed arresting and started forthwith in pursuit.

Within two blocks he had two of his brother officers chasing with him, and farther on they gathered up another one, to say nothing of the several onlookers who joined for the pure pleasure of the chase.

The policemen were used to chasing men, but Mr. Hadley was not, and in spite of his utmost efforts he was soon left in the rear. As he kept on, panting and puffing, and seeing more and more ground stretch between himself and the bluecoats, and was finally left out of sight altogether, it came over him what a good idea it would have been for them to have carried paper scent, as the boys used to when they played hare and hounds, for now they were like to catch their man so far away that he would never be able to find them.

And, indeed, it was a long and merry chase, and when it came to an end, as luck would have it, a patrol-wagon was just passing, and into it the triumphant bluecoats thrust their man in the striped coat, one of them going with him while

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the rest dispersed, the first retracing his steps till he met the breathless Mr. Hadley.

“Got him? Of course we got him. He’s safe enough, never you worry. You can go down and appear against him in the morning.”

“In the morning!” gasped Mr. Hadley. “In the morning! I’m not waiting till morning. It’s right now that I want to talk to him!”

The officer regarded him a moment, and then, “Would yer mind tellin’ me what the man has been doin’?” he inquired.

Mr. Hadley leaned against a building till he had regained his breath and his self-control.

“Six or seven years ago,” he said, “my five children went out in a little gasoline launch for a day’s excursion. That man went with them to run the launch for them. We never saw them again and could get no trace of them, and supposed they had all drowned together. But to-day I ran across him, and when he saw that I recognized him and was going to speak to him, he ran. You will understand that I can’t wait till to-morrow to know what became of my children.”

The officer glanced at his watch. “My own time is up,” he said. “I’ll walk up with you.”

"Take your time an' get your breath back," he added presently. "He is safe enough; 't was Larry O'Flannagan had him by the shoulder, an' no man ever yet broke from Larry's grip when he once got a good grip on 'im. He 's safe enough."

Safe enough he certainly was, and an hour later he stood face to face with the father of the Hadley children.

"You 've made a mistake," he repeated. "You 've made a mistake. My name is not Pearson. My name is Franks, John Franks. I never lived in the Port; never was across the line into Mexico at all, in fact. No, I never saw you before, not to my knowledge at least."

He said it all over again stubbornly, and, with dark and scowling face, he declared that Mr. Hadley would be sorry for this trouble he was making him, and he wanted it understood most emphatically that he had never been in Mexico six years ago or at any other time and that his name was John Franks.

But Mr. Hadley knew he was *not* mistaken, he knew the man *was* Pearson, and he would not back down or give one hair's breadth, and under

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his steady, stern gaze Pearson suddenly threw up the game with a vehement burst of profanity, winding up with the inquiry as to what earthly difference it made to Hadley about the launch, anyhow?

Mr. Hadley stared at him a moment.



“WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MY CHILDREN?”

“Launch!” he said slowly, — “launch! What do you suppose I care about the launch? What I want to know is, what did you do with my children?”

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It was now Pearson's turn to stare. His jaw dropped, and his face turned ashy.

"Your children? What do you mean? Did n't they find Miss Marian and the kids all right?"

"Find them! Where? Where did you leave them? They've never been seen from that day to this. Speak up! What did you do with them?"

Pearson crumpled down into a chair. There was no more resistance in him.

"Good Heavens! Hadley, I never dreamed of any harm coming to them. I'll tell you all I know about it."

And tell it he did, holding nothing back. He told it all, — how Cunningham had discharged him for no fault of his, so he declared, and how he had vowed that he would get even with the dude; he would n't take dirty treatment from no man. He had nothing against the girl and the kids; he would n't have hurt them, but he did n't suppose it would. People were going out to those picnics every day, and they often camped overnight, and when he saw what a daisy the launch was, — she ran like oil, — it just came to him

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that he could leave them there on the Island and run the launch over to Santa Anita, where he knew a couple of fellows who would take it off his hands.

So he did it; he was owing the fellow at Santa Anita about seventy-five dollars that he would have paid long before if Cunningham had not fired him; and he got there before the storm got really bad and hunted up his friend that night and found he would be glad to take the launch on the debt and pay him the difference.

The storm was sure a bad one, but he had thought that Miss Marian and the kids would be all right, for the boy had been telling about a house on the Island around on the sheltered side and a cave, too, and he left them all the food and blankets, and he thought Cunningham would be after them the first thing in the morning. He'd left Santa Anita as soon as the storm was over so anybody could leave, and, of course, he had not heard anything about the tragedy at the Port, but he'd swear by everything holy that he never dreamed of any harm coming to them.

Mr. Hadley explained then; he told the man

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huddled up before him of the search that had been made, and how he himself had just in the last week learned what and where Smugglers' Island was, and how he was even then on his way to see if after all these years there was some trace still to be found in San Moros.

When he had finished, Pearson straightened up a little.

“Look a-here, Hadley,” he said, “I’ve been some tough, but I’d never ‘a’ done a thing like that if I’d ‘a’ known it, and since then I’ve been straight. I told you the truth when I said my name was Franks; that is my name; I used Pearson at the Port for other reasons, but when I got back to God’s country I went back to my own name. I was married under it about a year later. My wife is a fine woman, and we’ve got two fine children. I’ve been as straight as a string and we’ve got some ahead. O Hadley, don’t put me through for this! — it will come harder on my wife and the kids than it will on me if you do, — and I’ll go down with you and help you hunt, show you the way and all; and you can use my money to the last cent; it ain’t much, but it’s all yours to carry on the search;

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and I'll stand by you and help you as long as there's life in me, for, as God is my witness, Hadley, I never meant no harm to Miss Marian and your kids. I would n't ask it if 't was n't for my own kids."

Mr. Hadley was thinking. He believed the man was telling the truth, and no punishment meted out to him would bring back the dead. As far as that went, what punishment would be fitter than to take him back with him and let him see, if, indeed, there was anything left to see, the terrible suffering his act had caused? And there would be something left; not six years nor seven would destroy what five deaths had left on that grim island in San Moros.

Before they sailed, Mr. Hadley had time to write to his wife and tell her of his finding Pearson and of what he had learned from him and of the latter's agony of remorse. After receiving the letter, Mrs. Hadley sat down and wrote most of its contents to Mrs. Harris, for she knew their old friends would be anxious to hear any news. After hearing that letter read, Clarence declared that he could have lived seven years, or twice seven years on Smugglers', and he dared bet

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Marian could. But his father and mother were quite sure there was no hope of that.

"Why," said Mrs. Harris, "Jennie would not have lived three days after exposure to that storm. I never knew such a delicate child."

"And," Mr. Harris declared, "if they had lived any length of time at all, some one would have seen some sign of them in all this time. Probably they took refuge in that cave and were washed out and drowned the first night."

"Perhaps," he admitted. "I'd forgotten about Jennie being so sickly, and Delbert himself was not what you would call rugged, but if they lived through the storm there's a chance, I tell you. Their not being seen since doesn't cut any figure. There was a reason for that. I never told Delbert, for I did n't want to frighten him, and he was a nervous little chap, but no Indian ever went to Smugglers'. You could n't have hired one to, and I tell you, if they lived through the first night, there's a chance! and oh, glory! *would n't* I have liked to go along?"

The steamer that Mr. Hadley and Pearson had taken passage on was pretty well filled up with passengers. Among others there was a

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group of mining men going to the Port, whence they would make their way inland, and there was a wealthy Mexican family also bound for the Port, with a half-dozen fine-looking daughters who reminded you of all the Spanish romance you had ever read every time you looked at them.

There were various others, and among them all Mr. Hadley and Pearson attracted no particular attention until the morning they were nearing the Port, when it was learned that Mr. Franks and the white-haired gentleman with him had a launch aboard and were going to be set down in it out in the Gulf and were not going into the Port at all. It seemed that the captain had known about it all the time, but to the passengers it seemed like a very queer thing to do.

However, some one made the announcement that the two were going to examine some guano caves for a rich company, and that seemed to explain everything, and the passengers watched with interest while the launch was being made ready and lowered, and the mining men all hung over the rail and cheered as she shot off across

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the water, and the pretty señoritas waved their handkerchiefs, and then everybody turned his attention to watching the channel, for if the passengers did not keep a sharp lookout, what was



THE PRETTY SEÑORITAS WAVED THEIR HANDKERCHIEFS

to hinder the captain from forgetting himself and coming up sharp on the rocks?

They passed the Rosalie Group before long. On dark and cloudy nights people on boats passing there can hear children crying, and if the

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night is actually stormy, you are likely to see Marian Hadley walk across the white-capped waves wrapped in a long cloak. This is a solemn fact. The captain told it himself. He said he did not tell the tale at night. No one connected the name of Hadley with the white-haired Mr. Hadley who had left them in the launch.

Pearson was running the launch. Mr. Hadley had Clarence's map spread out on his knee. There was silence between them. Pearson's face looked drawn and old. Mr. Hadley was tired and patient; he was looking at the map, but he was not thinking of it.

Pearson leaned forward to look at the little map.

"I don't remember just what the shore-line looked like along here," he said, "but I guess I shan't miss San Moros."

He did not, either. About noon he turned into the place, remembering Delbert's instructions which tallied with the map correctly. The tide was high just then, anyway, and there was no danger of sandbars or sunken rocks. In a little more he could point out to Mr. Hadley the outline of Smugglers' Island as he remembered it.

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Afterwards, as they got pretty close to it, he said in a low voice, "Maybe we'd better go in back of it. That's where they said the harbor and the pier were, and it will be a better place to moor the launch than this pile of rocks ahead."

Mr. Hadley assented; so they turned her nose and ran out by the sandy point and round it in back into the harbor.

It seemed shadowy in there. It was dark and uncanny, Pearson thought. He shuddered. Not a sign of life had they seen other than the sea-birds, for the old canoe was too far up the beach to catch the eye, and the wickiup was so covered with vines that it blended perfectly with its background, especially as the doors and window were shut.

Had they landed, they would have seen the path. Had Marian's watermelons been a little higher, they would have attracted attention by reason of their regular rows, but they were scarcely above the holes yet. At the pier, too, there was nothing to tell them anything. The raft was farther along, back of some mango bushes.

There were the bananas and the palms. The

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corral fence was so overgrown that, like the wickiup, it attracted no attention till one was very close to it.

They stepped out of the launch and moored her to the pier. Mr. Hadley noticed that Pearson's face was gray again. He was losing his nerve. It seemed to him as if the air in this narrow slit in the hills were suffocating him.

"I'll take the things out," he said to his companion.

"All right," said Mr. Hadley. His voice was quiet and even, and, turning, he walked toward the hill.

Pearson stepped back into the launch, cursing himself under his breath for his own lack of self-control, for he was trembling; but taking the things out and carrying them up past the pier steadied him a little.

Then he started to follow Mr. Hadley, and was glancing about wondering if there was any particular choice of spots to pitch camp in, when something on the hilltop caught his eyes. He stopped and stared with his mouth open. Out from among the bushes into an open space came one, two, three, four, five persons, and some of

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them were children! A sudden weakness came over him. He dropped where he was, and for a moment everything went whirling black. When he came to himself he was sitting on the ground,



SUDDENLY CAME A CHORUS OF CLEAR YOUNG VOICES

his knees clasped in his arms, as he rocked back and forth, repeating over and over his wife's name, "Rose, Rose, Rose, it's them! O Rose, it's them! I ain't killed 'em, Rose! Rose!"

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Mr. Hadley had scanned the hillside to no avail as he started to walk toward it, and then he noticed what seemed to be a path leading to a mass of brilliant bloom beyond. He followed in the path. The tracks seemed to be those of deer.

But when he came to the blossoms he was surprised. There were nasturtiums and poppies, a wild riot of them beside a little spring, or shallow, scooped-out well, that was walled with rocks except at one place where stepping-stones led down. And there, sitting half buried in the clear water, shaded by overhanging bloom, was a two-quart Mason jar about half full of oysters.

A most charming refrigerator truly, and Mr. Hadley stared at it stupidly, not even yet understanding, when suddenly came a chorus of clear young voices calling to him from above, and, turning, the father saw what he had never hoped to see again this side the gates of heaven, —his five children racing down the hill to meet him.

CHAPTER XIV

THE END OF THE PICNIC

PEARSON sat on the pier, swinging his feet. His feelings would have been hard to describe, they were so very mixed up. One moment he was swearing softly at the launch that was dipping gracefully up and down before him, then he grinned and whistled, also softly, a few bars of a rollicking tune.

He glanced out of the corner of his eye at the group up there by that tumbled pile of red and yellow and green. He could hear their voices, but he could not hear what they were saying. By and by, when they had had a little more time, perhaps he would go up there, though what in thunder he would say was more than he knew. Anyway, they were alive. That was something to tell Rose. Rose! How her face had looked when she bade him good-bye. She had known that he had been tough, — thank goodness he had not lied to her! — but he had not gone into details, and when he had had to tell her about that affair at the Port, — well, it was

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a darned sight worse than anything else he had had to do. And when she kissed him good-bye, she had whispered that she would pray for him. Pray! Pearson laughed a little and kicked at the rocks. Wa'n't that just like a woman? Pray! What good was it going to do to pray now about a thing that happened seven years ago? But she would pray all right, and like as not she would always feel that her prayers had had something to do with their finding the lost ones alive and safe. Suppose they had died! What good would praying have done then? he wondered.

But Rose would pray just the same, and when he got back to her, — he might have to ride a brake-beam to do it, — she would turn in and work her fingers to the bone to help him get another nest-egg rolled up, and never a word of blame would she say. No; she would spend all her spare breath thanking God that her prayers had been answered.

What a queer thing life was, anyway! Here, seven years ago Cunningham had served him, Pearson, low-down mean, and he had retaliated. The affair was between him and Cunningham, was n't it? It would seem so; but look you,

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seven years afterwards the blow he dealt recoils on — whom? Himself? No, not by a jugful! On Rose; on Rose and his youngsters, the very people of the whole wide world that he loved and wanted most desperately to protect. If it had only been him, he would n't say a word, but — darn it all!

Well, there they were coming down. He rose and turned. It was an awkward situation. Really, it would have been easier to stand up to be shot.

It was Marian and Delbert. Pearson drew a long breath, and, throwing back his shoulders, went to meet them.

Marian was first. She held out her hand, all brown and calloused, and her eyes shone at him from under wet lashes.

“Mr. Pearson,” she said, “papa has explained it all to us, and — well, I guess I am too happy to lay up anything against you to-day.”

Pearson took her hand. He choked a little, but found nothing to say. Then Delbert, the little, slender, nervous, eager lad, stood there, tall as his sister, straight and strong, and his clear eyes were steady and stern.

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“Marion is of a pretty forgiving disposition,” and his voice was cold and held scorn. “I think myself —”

But Pearson reached out and gripped the hand the boy had not offered him, and found his voice.

“Young man,” he said, “I am so all-fired glad to see you that I don’t care a red cent *what* you think!”

Marian laid a gentle hand on her brother’s arm.

“O Delbert,” she said softly, “not to-day, dear, not with papa here to take us all back safe to mamma. Besides, — it is n’t a parallel case, I know, — but suppose Davie had died that day he fell!”

Delbert looked from her face, tremulous with joy, back to Pearson’s, and, remembering that terrible day that he had been in some small measure to blame for, he suddenly understood, understood something of what the man in front of him probably had been suffering.

His face softened, and he returned the pressure of the other’s hand.

“All right!” he said boyishly. “I guess what Marian says goes. You will have to fight it out

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with Mr. Cunningham about the launch, but come on up to dinner now. Say," he continued with a wistful eye on the pile of things from the launch, "you got anything to eat in those? — any bread or crackers?"

Up at the wickiup Mr. Hadley sat on a chunk of driftwood and looked over the treasures Esther and Davie showed to him, while Marian and Jennie prepared dinner.

There was a great deal to show. There were the rabbit-skin books and the paper-tree-bark ones and the shell and bone and wooden toys. There were the ropes and baskets.

Davie could not remember his father, but he curled down at his feet and, with an angelic expression on his face, smiled up into his eyes in the sunniest way possible. And every two minutes he would remember some other treasure and, hopping up, would go to fetch it. His father, watching his little limping gait, smiled at Marian, who shook her head sadly. "Too bad, daughter, but I think mamma will be willing to accept him, even if he is a little damaged."

"We'll throw off a little on his price," said Jennie.

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Pearson had brought up the lunch from the launch, and the Hawks fell upon it with the greatest enthusiasm. After dinner they began to pack up those things they wished to take with them.

And, of course, before they left the Island they had to show the old canoe that would not need to be finished now, and the tar retort, and High-Tide Pool, and the watermelon-patch, and everything else.

"I'll bet," said Delbert, "that this place will be more popular for picnics from the Port than the Rosalies for a while."

So Marian left her dishes, the kettle and little dishpan, the knives and forks, and even the glass jar on the table. They put everything in neat order and tied the window down, and put the storm doors in place and fastened them, for though they did not expect ever to see the place again, they could not bare to think of the dear little wickiup standing untidy and open to the elements.

They took a last survey from the top of the hill and then went down the path, the smugglers' old path, to the pier.

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They turned out the little burros, but when they called Jackie, he was nowhere to be found. He had wandered off somewhere with the other burros, as he had done sometimes of late. The children, Davie especially, felt badly to go without saying good-bye to Jackie, but Marian explained that he would probably forget them in a little while and would be perfectly happy with the other burros, and perhaps would be happier than if they had stayed and made him carry loads for them once in a while. So Davie smoothed out his face, and curled down at his father's feet again, quite contented. Nothing ever upset Davie for any great length of time.

So the launch puffed out of the harbor and round the point, and then Smugglers' was left behind them, and they were crossing the bay past the salt reefs, and now were out of sight of the egg islands, and soon were encountering the big waves that had guarded their prison so long. Jennie laughed, remembering how seasick she had been when they came in. Then San Moros itself passed from their sight, and the life there glided into a closed past.

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Already Marian was planning a new and different future.

“Father,” she said, “you say you had to mortgage the home to get the money to come for us. A mortgage is always a hard thing to lift, is n’t it?”

“Apt to be, daughter,” replied Mr. Hadley, “but after seeing what you children did with your bare hands back on that Island, I am not worrying about a little thing like a mortgage. If you don’t like the place, we’ll get your uncle to let us in some way on some of that wild land of his up in the mountains, and you can carve out and build up a place to suit yourselves.”

The steamer at the Port had unloaded her passengers, — those that were to get off there, — and had since been busy taking in a nice little pile of cargo. Her captain wished to go out that night, and they were about ready to start. There were a good many down on the pier, coming and going, and the place was lighted by a few lanterns, leaving great spaces of shadow in between their circles of light.

Mr. Cunningham’s new launch was just in with a picnic party from the Rosalies. They

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were unloading shawls and baskets and pails of clams.

"I say, Cunningham," called out one of this party, "is that Beekman's crowd we passed out there?"

"No," was the answer; "Beekman will not be in for two days. I had a wire to-day."

"Well, who in thunder was it, then? We passed a launch out there. If it was n't Beekman, who was it?"

"Perhaps it was the two men the captain dropped in the Gulf this morning. He said they would be in in a few days. Perhaps they changed their minds."

"Not much. This batch had women and children. They were laughing and singing, — mighty fine voices, too. We supposed it was those new cousins of Mrs. Beekman's from New York."

"No, not they yet, but there comes a launch now. By Jove, there are women in it too."

Out of the darkness of the night and the water a launch came swiftly into the broad light of the stream. A moment they showed clear as in daylight to the crowd on the pier,

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but that was not long enough for any one to recognize those upturned faces before they glided into a shadowy place not far from the other launch.

People watched the new arrival curiously as it discharged its passengers, but they did not come out of the shadow.

Then one man detached himself from the group and advanced into the light in front of Cunningham.

“Well, Cunningham,” he said in a clear voice, “there’s your launch.”

Cunningham stared at him.

“There’s your launch, I say,” repeated the other, thrusting his face forward a little. Still no answer from the bewildered Cunningham, who could not imagine what he was talking about.

The newcomer straightened up and placed his arms akimbo.

“I say,” he repeated again, “that I have brought back your launch. Launch, man, launch! There — is — your — launch!”

From the group in the shadow came a little rippling laugh.

Cunningham started. It was nearly seven long

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years, but he had not forgotten Marian Hadley's laugh. He snatched at a lantern, but before he could detach it from its hook, a young fellow beside him, a great stalwart fellow, yelled and began to swing his hat.

"The Hadleys!" he shouted, "the Hadleys!" and threw the hat into the air, but before it could fall he was rushing over, calling Delbert.

Marian, laughing, grasped his arm.

"For Heaven's sake, Bobbie," she said, "take us girls up to your mother before they get here with those lanterns."

Late, very late, that night Delbert sat on the edge of Bobbie's bed and said to him:—

"Now, look here! what I want to know is, how in creation it could happen that, with that bay fairly teaming with fish and turtles, there could be over six years with never a canoe really inside of it, never one within hailing, or even signaling, distance of the Island, though it must be known among the Indians that there is fresh water and an old banana-patch there."

"Simplest thing in the world," said Bobbie, tossing his shoes to one side and peeling off his socks. "All the Indians around these parts know



THE HADLEYS! THE HADLEYS!

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that San Moros is bad medicine for a native. I never thought much about it, but I'll bet on it now, that it was those same old smugglers. Probably they murdered some Indians there to prevent their going off and telling of the place, or something like that. I never heard of the Island, but I have heard the Indians say numbers of times that people who go in to camp there never come out again. They think the farther shores are inhabited by some style of devil or hobgoblin, and I remember now I have heard them saying that in the last few years they have seen devil fires burning there."

"Devil fires!" said Delbert helplessly, dropping his hands to his sides. "Devil fires!"

"Your camp-fires, of course," returned Bobbie; "but if those fellows in the canoes that you tried to go out and intercept, — if they saw you at all, — that would be explanation enough of why they put up their sails and put off as fast as they could."

To the mother waiting on that far-off mortgaged farm, a message went out that night, the last one sent from the office. It contained eight

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words, and it was followed by a fat, fat letter the next day, which explained that it in turn was to be followed by a party of six just as soon as certain absolutely necessary sewing could be done.

But, after all, the telegram contained the heart of the matter, the sunshine of the whole wide world and part of that of the next world, all on a piece of yellow paper. At least, Mrs. Hadley thought so when she tore it open and read:—

“All found alive and well on Smugglers’ Island.”

THE END

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